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to stand against y<sup>e</sup> wiles of y<sup>e</sup> devil. Eph. 6. ver. 11.  
Through god we shall do valiantly for he it is that  
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The Spiritual Combat:

*Edwards in Answer*

OR, THE

Christian Pilgrim

IN HIS

*Spiritual Conflict and Conquest.*

By *John de Castaniza.* V

Revised and Recommended by the Reverend  
RICHARD LUCAS, D. D. Rector of  
St. Stephen Coleman-street.

*Second Edition.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for Samuel Keble, at the Turk's-Head  
in Fleet-street, 1710.

who has no comfort from himself,  
and desires none from any creature, what  
shall I do if I find it not in thee? when  
you find yourself thus desolate and abandoned,  
remember and banish all self. Come:  
bottle in a garden, on a grass, and in his  
greatest afflictions, but not any  
will of God but that he done, if for true  
Devotion is a readiness of will to follow  
it with a grass upon our shoulders,  
and not by a feeling of sensible Devot:  
nor look on our as unclean, Blasphemous  
or perverse thoughts, but in such Distress  
be satisfied it God only intends to Con:  
vince you of your weakness and unworthi:  
ness, and if you by nature have such a  
violent inclination to a bad manner  
of Evil, it without a Divine Assistance  
you will be in danger of falling into  
them. raise up then your Heart in Prayer  
to him with a full hope and Confidence  
in his mercies, and watchful Provi:  
dence. with thanks for the troubles,  
and Temptations which make us look  
into ourselves and are easier driven  
away by a quiet and prudent bearing  
of them, than by resisting of them by earnestness  
and Inquietude. Save us O Lord or  
else we perish Everlastingly.

*Be in Love w<sup>th</sup> Virtue, or I per-  
suade of thy Nature or Temper  
will turn all Goodness into Rancor  
and despise a Regular Life, and  
ridiculous TO THE <sup>all purity of</sup>  
Heart, and an exalted Spirit,  
TRANSLATOR. <sup>Let thou</sup>  
<sup>command w<sup>th</sup> I chains of Innocence</sup>  
<sup>and Sir, I Beauty of Religion</sup>*

I Have perused the Book you sent  
me and your Translation; and here  
I give you, as you desire, my Sense on  
both. Your Translation is easy and na-  
tural, and such as, I think, has done  
the Author no wrong. The Book it  
self is writ with a Spirit of true Piety,  
and in a little Compass and a very good  
Order, contains a great many excellent  
Directions for the Conquest of all inor-  
dinate Appetites, and the attaining a  
true Conformity to the Divine Will: I  
heartily wish it may meet with the Suc-  
cess you aim at.

*That w<sup>th</sup> is I prevailing  
Temper of souls in this Life will*

Your Affectionate Friend,

*Doubtless he to in rather too. Fortitude*

*Obtain Reverence* Ri. Lucas. *and enjoys*

*a Heaven of Content, and Peace, unde*

*all evils and Calamities, PRE*

*is true Religion, and Virtue*



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## P R E F A C E.

**T**O you dear Christian Reader, who are so happy as to have left the beaten Road of Destruction, and are entred into the true way of Life, who have set your Affections upon things above, and are therefore seriously bent upon purchasing those Pleasures that are there, whatever it may cost you; to you I present this little Treatise, wherein you have excellent Instructions for guiding you in the true way to that Heavenly Country: You have here put into your hand very proper Weapons for defending your self, and offending the Enemies you are like to meet with in the way; you have here drawn out before you their several Forts and Snares; that you may be prepared before-hand, either to avoid them or valiantly break through them: In fine, you have here pointed out to the some Windings and Turnings in your Road, which many for want of knowing or being inform'd of, have taken a wrong Path, that has led them upon dangerous Precipices, to the ruin of their Souls and their everlasting Concerns: So that if you will but be so wise as to walk on warily, and follow with Discretion the Directions here given, you may  
hope,

## The Preface.

hope, in time with Safety, (tho' not without some Difficulty) to climb up the high Mountain of Perfection, on the top whereof you will be refreshed with the sweet Influences and Breathings of the Holy Ghost, to comfort you after the Labours, Toyls and Fatigues of your Journey.

There are many Books wherein this divine Wisdom is more largely taught; but the way of attaining being so briefly and familiarly comprised in this little Book, it may be thought of more Service to such as want either Leisure or Capacity to look over bigger Volumes.

This, with the desire of some Friends, put me upon translating and printing a 2d Relation this little Treatise, whereby I hope I have done the Author no wrong in any material Part, tho' I have taken the Liberty of leaving out, or altering some few places that might otherwise perhaps have prejudiced a well minded Reader.

This Book indeed is written with such a Spirit of Piety, that it hath met with a general Approbation and Esteem wherever it came to be known, insomuch that there have been many Editions of it in most of the European Languages. The Author of it is generally thought to be one Juan de Castaniza a devout Spaniard, who lived about a hundred Years since.

There were some Things added by other pious Men, who in one of the former of our English Editions, took the pains to clear up and explain  
several

## The Preface.

*several places in the Text ; which savouring much of the same sincere Spirit of Devotion, I have here made use of for your Benefit, and transferred hither by way of Explication, whatsoever seemed Pertinent or conducing to the Illustration of the Author, cloathing their Sense in a more modern Dress, tho' with as little Alteration as possible :*

*Condition what remains Christian Reader, but that you set your self seriously to the Practice of the Truth, herein contained ? Which will be the way for you to reap the Benefit, and to me some amends for the Pains I have taken.*

29 MR 59

T H E



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T H E

# Spiritual Combat.

C H A P. I.

*Wherein Christian Perfection consists, and of  
Four Means necessary to obtain it.*

**I**F you seriously desire (my dearly Be-  
loved) to attain to those high degrees  
of Perfection that the Christian Reli-  
gion calls you to, which is, *to be so uni-*  
*ted to God, as to become one Spirit with him,*  
1 Cor. 6. 17. (it being also the most pro-  
fitable Employment, and most excellent and  
divine Enterprize imaginable,) It will be ne-  
cessary for you in the first place, to know  
*wherein true Perfection, or a spiritual Life con-*  
*sists* ; because many for want of this neces-  
sary Consideration, have placed it in leading  
an austere Life ; in great Mortifications of  
the Body , in much Fasting, Watching, and  
the like rigorous Exercises ; others, espe-  
cially Women, think this Perfection consists  
in the Repetition and daily Recital of ma-  
ny Prayers, in hearing many Sermons, and  
frequenting the Church, and the Sacraments,  
and many also of them, that are accounted  
good and religious Persons, perswade them-  
selves, that all they have to do is to be si-  
lent

The Im-  
portance  
of this  
Know-  
ledge.

Some  
place Per-  
fection in  
Austeri-  
ties.

Others in  
saying  
over ma-  
ny Pray-  
ers.

Others in  
reserved-  
ness and  
silence.

B

All  
which  
are good  
means,  
but not  
directly  
tending  
to Perfe  
ction.

lent and reserv'd, and to live at home retir'd, and at quiet in a sober and regular manner. Thus some one way, some another, tend to their desir'd Perfection, but are all far short of it, and are deceived in the right way leading to it; for tho' these several Employments may be sometimes the *MEANS* to obtain the true Spirit of Perfection, and sometimes also the *Fruit* of the same Spirit, yet we must not say that in them alone Christian Perfection, or a Spiritual Life consists. 'Tis true, the discreet use of them is doubtless a powerful means to obtain the Grace of the Holy Ghost, to fortify us against our natural Weaknesses and Infirmities, to shield, and to arm us against the Deceits and Assaults of our common Enemy, and finally to perform our Practices of Piety with more Sweetness and Alacrity, (especially whilst we are Novices in this Spiritual Conflict.) They are also the Fruit of the same Spirit in those that are well experienced and enlightned Persons; who therefore use their *Body* hardly, as well because it has been instrumental in offending their Creator, as to keep it in subjection for the future; who love Silence and live in Solitude, to shun all occasions of Sin, and to attend their Heavenly Meditations with more Quiet and Tranquility, being thereby disentangled from the Snares and Impediments of the World; who are devout and diligent observers of the publick Service, are forward in Works of Charity, frequently in Prayer, and at the holy Communion,

to

to give the more Glory to his Divine Majesty, and to unite themselves more closely to him by the Bonds of Love.

But as for those that rest here, and place their *End* in these outward Exercises, the very same practices may be sometimes the occasion of their Fall, and greater Mischief to them, than open and notorious Sins. And this not through default of the Exercises themselves, which are truly good and warranted by the Practice and Example of many holy Persons; but because they who use them, are so wholly intent upon the outward Performance of them, that they leave their *interior*, abandoned to the Power of their corrupt Affections, and the hidden Snares of the Devil; who seeing them so far short of the right way, not only suffers them quietly to continue these Exercises, that they find so much sweetness and satisfaction in, but raises their vain Imaginations to think they are even at the Gates of Paradise. Such is the false Perswasion of some, who are sometimes so taken up with their Meditation of profound, curious and agreeable Matters, that they conceit themselves to have got above the World, and all Creatures, and rapt up into the third Heaven.

But how dangerously all such Souls are deceived, in how many Errors they are entangled, and how far they are strayed from the right way of Perfection, will easily appear by the rest of their Actions. For they are commonly very singular and

They that rest in these lower exercises are in great danger.

As may appear by the rest of their Actions.



conceited, full of Bitterness, severe and curious Censurers of their Neighbour's Lives and Conversations, and prone to murmur at their proceedings; and if you go to thwart them in their Opinions, and admonish them of their Errors, or never so little hinder them from their accustomed Exercises, (which are strongly imprinted in their Imaginations) you shall presently perceive them strangely altered from their Calmness, and fall into Passions and extreme Unquietness.

Especially want  
of Resignation in  
time of  
Affliction

And if it please God (in order to give them a true Knowledge of their State) to send or permit any Affliction, Sickness, or Persecution to befall them, (which never come but by his special Providence, and are often for the Tryal of his Servants Sincerity) how soon may you discover the false Foundations they build upon? how corrupt is their inward Man? and how full of secret Pride? for they refuse to resign their Wills, and to humble their Hearts under God's powerful Hand, in the various Changes of Prosperity and Adversity. They think it hard to follow the Example of the humble suffering Son of God, to subject themselves to their fellow Creatures, and take their seeming Enemies to be (what they truly are) their dearest Friends. They don't consider that it is God's infinite Goodness that sends them all these Adversities, as Promoters of their Perfection, and Helpers in the Reformation of their unmortified Passions; which is an evident Sign that  
such

such Persons are in a very dangerous State. For the Eyes of their Souls being dazled, and corrupted by gazing upon these outward good Actions of theirs; they arrogate to themselves, I know not what Degrees of Perfection; and from thence lifting themselves up with Pride, they think they have a right to judge and condemn the Actions of others; nor is there any hopes of their being recalled or cured, unless God himself by an extraordinary Grace, and particular interposing of his Goodness strikes powerfully upon their Hearts, and dissipates the Darkness of their Minds with the Divine Rays of his gracious Light, letting them see their Danger, that they may seek a Remedy; there being more likelihood of reclaiming a great and notorious Sinner, than one whose Defects are covered to himself under the appearance of Virtue and Piety.

True Perfection therefore consists in the Knowledge of God and our selves. In the love of God, and hatred of our selves in resignation to the Will of God, and denying our

Thus then it is manifest that true Christian Perfection consists not in the aforesaid practices and perswasions: You are to know therefore that it consists only in the true Knowledge of God's Goodness and Greatness, and of our own Baseness, Misery and Nothingness, and of the Proneness and Inclination of our Nature to all manner of Wickedness: Also in the hatred of our selves, and the love of God: And lastly. in the absolute denying of our own Will, and entire Resignation of it to the Divine Will and Pleasure: That is; that we submit our selves not only to Almighty God, but even to all Creatures for his sake, and for no other end than to

All  
which  
Christ  
has

taught  
us by

Word and  
Example.

please his Divine Majesty : And the more, since he deserves to be served and honoured, praised and glorified after the most perfect manner.

This is the SELF-DENIAL which Christ our Saviour requires of us ; *Matt. 16. 24. Luc. 9. 23.* this is the Obedience to which he invites and directs his faithful followers, both by his Word and Example : This is the Cross, which his Servants are to take up, following the Steps of their Saviour : This is that pure and true Charity which our Lord so frequently recommended to the whole World, and especially to his Disciples, as his particular Friends and Children, after his last Supper.

And we  
must also  
do it if  
we mean  
to be vi-  
ctorious.

And because at the same time that you aspire to this high degree of Perfection, you must do violence to your self, and think generously of overcoming the least Motions of your own perverse Will, and irregular Affections ; you must prepare your self for the Fight with all Watchfulness and Courage ; For the Crown of so great a Victory, is only for those that have fought valiantly, *2 Tim. 2. 5.*

Nor is  
there any  
thing  
more glo-  
rious to  
our  
selves, or  
more  
grateful  
to God.

For as this Combat is the greatest, and full of Difficulty, so is the ensuing Victory the most glorious to our selves, and the most grateful to God of any other ; inso-much, as if you overcome, mortify, and root out your own inordinate and unruly Affections, you offer up to God a more agreeable Sacrifice, than if (neglecting this) you should fast beyond the Austerity of the strictest



strictest Anachorites, or convert Thousands of Infidels and Sinners to the Faith of Christ. For though the Conversion of Souls be in it self more dear to God than the renouncing of our own Wills in small Matters; yet it is your part to will and to do that chiefly and most carefully which he most strictly requires of you. And this is a certain Truth, that the serious Mortification of your Passions is more agreeable to him, than if letting these grow in your Heart, you should serve him in the highest and holiest Employment.

And thus it being shewn wherein *Christian Perfection consists*, and that to obtain it, you must engage your self in a cruel and continual War, if you intend to be a Conqueror, it behoves you like a stout Christian Champion to provide your self with *four* things, being so many safe and necessary Weapons, in order to carry away the Palm and remain victorious in this Spiritual Combat; which are these: 1. *Diffidence of your self.* 2. *Confidence in God.* 3. *Spiritual Exercise.* 4. *Prayer.* Of all which I shall by God's Assistance now treat particularly in their proper Order.

But to obtain it, we must provide four necessary Weapons.

## C H A P. II.

*Of the Diffidence or Distrust of our selves.*

Distrust  
of our  
selves  
which is  
gotten  
first by a  
deep  
Sense of  
our Mi-  
fery.

2. By  
Prayer.

3. By of-  
ten refle-  
cting up-  
on our  
own  
Weak-  
ness.  
This  
Self-  
know-  
ledge is

**T**His *Diffidence of your self*, may be obtained three several ways: The *first* is by seriously considering and deeply acknowledging your own Baseness and Misery, and that of your self, you cannot do the least good thing.

2. The *second* way to get this Self-distrust, is to demand it of God (whose gracious Gift it is) with humble and earnest Prayers; and to prevail in your request, you ought first to yield and acknowledge that you truly want it, and that of your self you can never attain it. And thus sensible of your Poverty present your Prayer with a constant Faith and courageous hope, that his Divine Goodness will grant your Desire, for if you present your self often before him after this manner, and expect with perseverance the fulfilling your Petition, be confident it will sooner or later be granted you.

3. The *third* is, that as oft as you happen to fall into Sin, you immediately turn the Eye of your Mind upon your own Baseness, Misery, and Inability to do any thing that is good; for until this be truly known, and sincerely acknowledged by you, never hope to be secure from falling. Whosoever therefore aspires to a blessed Union with God, must first study this necessary Lesson  
of

of Self-knowledge, which the divine Mercy gives commonly to the proud and presumptuous, by *permitting them to fall into some notorious Sins*; by which they may be forced to confess their Frailty and Impotency, and according as their Pride is greater or less, so their Fall is commonly more or less grievous.

Wherefore presently after you have fallen, enter speedily into your self by an humble Reflection upon your own Vileness, beg constantly and importunately of God the true and inward Light of his Spirit to see your own Frailty, and Infirmary, and to keep you from falling into greater Faults, for the future.

This Distrust of your self is so necessary for you in this Combat, that without it you cannot only never hope to obtain the Conquest over your Enemies, but not so much as to suppress the least of your Passions or Imperfections. You are therefore seriously and frequently to reflect upon the Corruption of your natural Inclinations; (which is so often apt to make you conceive a good Opinion of your self and your own Actions,) and to persuade your self that you are *nothing*. Consider further the Vanity and Presumption of such self-conceits, and the Weakness of your own Forces, and how displeasing the one is to the divine Majesty, and how pleasing the other. For God loves a free Confession of our Frailty, and a real Acknowledgment of our Dependence upon his Power and Providence, from

very necessary to be learned.

And we must be careful to rise speedily after our fall.

Explanation.  
The great necessity of this Distrust in our own Strength. Is enforced from the corruption of our Nature.

And the weakness thereof.

And by considering how pleasing to God this Acknowledgment is.

whose know-



ledgment is, and how Pre-  
sumption displeases him. whose Bounty and Benignity all Grace and Goodness is derived into our Souls; since being left to our selves, we can neither think nor act any thing which hath the least Value.

You are therefore to study well this fundamental Lesson. Wherefore study well this *first* and fundamental Lesson, being a matter of very high Importance, and of God's own working, which he teacheth his dear Friends, sometimes by his Heavenly Inspirations, other times by permitting them to fall grievously, and to be tempted violently, and many other ways, as he knows best for them. And be sure to make serious use of the three ways here proposed; by the due Performance and Practice whereof, and your faithful Concurrence with God's Grace, which will never be wanting to your Endeavours, you may confidently hope to attain it.

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### C H A P. III.

#### *Of Confidence in God.*

**B**UT tho' *Distrust of your self* (as we have shewed :) be very necessary in this Combat, yet if you have no other Weapon, but that you must expect either to fly the Field, or be soon overcome. Wherefore in the next place, imploy your diligence in getting an intire Confidence in God, hoping, and begging from him his continual Assistance, and all good whatsoever; in obtaining

2. Confidence in God, which is obtained.

taining whereof, make use also of these three Means:

*First*, you must beg it fervently and humbly of the Divine Majesty.

1. By Prayer.

By considering the Divine Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, by which he can, knows how, and is willing to help.

*Secondly*: You are by the light of Faith to contemplate and consider his wonderful Power, and his infinite Goodness, to whom nothing is either impossible or difficult; and that his Goodness which has no Bounds, is always readily disposed by an inexpressible Desire to give you every Hour, and every Moment, all things necessary for a spiritual Life, and towards gaining an entire Victory over your Enemies. And indeed can it be possible that this divine Shepherd, who for three and thirty years so carefully, run after his strayed Sheep, and that with such Cries, and through ways so rough, and thorny, that it cost him no less a Price than his own Blood, and the Loss of his Life: Can it be possible, I say, now that he should turn away his Eyes of Compassion from a Soul that follows him, cries and calls after him, that he should not hear her now, and remember his own Promise, and lay her upon his sacred Shoulders, rejoicing with the Heavenly Citizens for her happy Return; *Luc. 15. v. 5.* Or who can imagin that our loving Lord God, who so much desires to enter into our Hearts, and make his Abode in our Souls; (*2 Cor. 6. v. 16.*) And to this End is always knocking for Admittance; (*Revel. 3. v. 20.*) that he may communicate to us the Heavenly Treasures of his Grace, should then keep at a distance, when we open to him our Hearts,

## Of Confidence in God.

Hearts, or should refuse his Presence, when we humbly and heartily invite him in.

3. By  
Medita-  
ting upon  
the holy  
Scri-  
ptures.

The *third* means to obtain this Confidence in God, is to reflect often upon the *infallible Truths*, that are taught us in so many places of the holy Scriptures, where it is frequently shewed us, that whosoever placeth all his Trust and Confidence in God shall never be confounded. See *Psal.* 21. v. 2. *Pf.* 27. v. 2, 3. *Pf.* 34. v. 5, 6, 7. *Pf.* 130. v. 6, 7. 8. *Pf.* 146, v. 3, 4, 5. *Jer.* 17. v. 7, 8. *Rom.* 5. v. 5. 2. *Cor.* 1. v. 9. *Hebr.* 6. v. 19. &c.

Another  
means is  
by think-  
ing on our  
own Frail-  
ty and  
Gods Om-  
nipotency  
in the be-  
ginning  
of each  
Action.

To these we may add another way to get this Distrust of our selves, and Confidence in God, which is : when there is an Occasion proffered you of doing any thing, before you set about it, first make Reflection upon your *own Frailty*, and the *Power and Goodness of God*, and after that you may determine to execute it : But if you observe not this Method in the beginning of any Action, you will find your self oftentimes much deceived, even when you think you have undertaken them in the best manner. For Pride and Presumption being so inherent in our Nature, it is impossible we can act in Virtue of this Diffidence of our selves, and Confidence in God, if we do not well consider our Actions before we determine to do them ; and take heed you be not mistaken in thinking you have attained this Diffidence of your self and Confidence in God when you are far short of it ; which you may easily perceive by the remaining Motions of the Mind that your frequent fallings in-  
to



to Sin produce in you. For if these Relapses make you sad and unquiet, and in a manner despair of making a spiritual Progress, it is to be feared that you have too much Confidence in your self, and little in God's Goodness; so that if your Sadness and Despair be great, you have reason to think that you have a great deal of Confidence in your own Strength, and little Faith in God; whereas he that has a true Distrust of himself, and a perfect Confidence in God, does not much wonder at his own Frailty, nor is vainly dejected at his frequent Stumblings, knowing them the Effect of his own Weakness, and therefore it hinders not the Confidence he ought to have in God's Goodness: On the contrary, it makes him enter into the greater Distrust of himself, and a more firm Confidence in his divine Bounty, conceiving indeed a Holy Anger against himself for his Sin, and a hearty and humbly Sorrow for offending his Creator, yet so, that with a new enkindled Zeal, and greater Courage than before, he continues the Design he has begun, and resolves to pursue his Enemies even to Death.

Where-  
by we  
shall not  
be foo-  
lishly de-  
jected at  
our fre-  
quent fail-  
ings.

As we can promise to ourselves nothing but Failings and Fallings, because of our selves we are able to do nothing; so also we may certainly promise to ourselves from our God, an entire Victory over all our Enemies, if we arm our Hearts with a lively Confidence in his Divine Majesty.

Expla-  
nation. By  
Gods as-  
sistance  
we can do  
all things.

But

Where-  
in many  
are de-  
ceived.

By rea-  
son of  
their Pride  
and Pre-  
sumption  
in their  
own  
Strength.

But many deceive themselves in suppo-  
sing that the Pusillanimity and Disquiet  
that follows upon the falling into Defects,  
is an Effect of Virtue ; because it is accom-  
panied with Displeasure for their Fault,  
whereas indeed it commonly springs from  
Pride, and Presumption, and is founded in  
*self Confidence*, and Conceit in their own  
Strength, which they too much relying  
upon, find by the woful Experience of their  
Fall, that they are truly weak, and really  
nothing, and thereupon they become trou-  
bled and astonished as at a new thing, and so  
begin to despair and lose Heart, seeing that  
Prop which sustained their vain Confidence  
fallen down to the Ground.

But this seldom befalls those that are truly  
humble: For they confiding in God alone,  
and presuming nothing of themselves, when  
they chance to fall into any Fault, feel in-  
deed a true Grief in their Souls, but are nei-  
ther disquieted, nor astonished, seeing clear-  
ly (by the Light of Truth :) that this pro-  
ceeds from their own Misery and Frailty.

#### C H A P. IV.

*Of continual Exercise ; and first that the Un-  
derstanding is carefully to be kept from Igno-  
rance and Curiosity,*

The  
Third  
Weapon  
is conti-

**I**T has been shewed how much this Di-  
strust of our selves, and Trust in God's  
Goodness, helps us in our spiritual Conflict ;  
but

but they alone are yet insufficient to gain the Victory, and preserve us from Relapses; and therefore we must add to these continual Exercise, which is the third thing we have proposed to treat of, and this chiefly consists in a right use of our Understanding and Will.

First therefore we must clear the Understanding of two things, *Ignorance* and *Curiosity*. First from *Ignorance*, that it may have a clear Light to see what is necessary to overcome and mortifie our corrupt Passions and Affections. And this Light may be obtained two ways: *First* and chiefly by earnest Prayer, imploring God's holy Spirit, that he would please to infuse this Light into our Soul. *Secondly* by daily Practice of profoundly and diligently searching into the Circumstances of our Actions, and Affairs, considering things as they are in themselves, and not as they appear outwardly. Do but make Tryal of this Exercise for a little time, and you will come easily to understand what Things are really and truly good; and the evil, Deceit and Vanity of others, which are not able to contribute that Satisfaction they promise at first sight and in Appearance, but rather rob us of the true Peace and Quiet of our Consciences.

This Point (which is to esteem all things according to their true and real Worth and Goodness:) being well practised, will open your Eyes to see the Meanness of all such Trifles, which those of the World most desire and delight in. It will shew us that Earthly Honours

nual Exercise. Which consists in a right use of the understanding.

The Understanding is to be kept from Ignorance and Curiosity, and first from Ignorance.

1. By Prayer.
2. By a diligent search into our own Actions.

Explanation. This search in- to all things according to their



true  
worth,  
will open  
our Eyes  
to see the  
means of  
all world-  
ly Vani-  
ties.

Honours and Pleasures are meer Vanity and  
*Affliction of Spirit* Ecclesiast. i. v. 4. That In-  
juries, Infamies, and Affronts patiently suf-  
fered, are the Promoters of true and solid  
Happiness: That Afflictions are indeed Kind-  
nesses, and that seeming Crosses are follow-  
ed with certain Contentments. That to des-  
pise the World, is better than to be Master  
of it; and that to be willingly obedient  
for the Love of God to the meanest Crea-  
ture is a more magnanimous Action, and  
the sign of a more generous Spirit, than to  
command the greatest Kings: That the  
humble Acknowledgment of our own no-  
thing, is more acceptable to the Divine Ma-  
jesty, than to dive into the height and  
depth of all Sciences: That to conquer our  
own Appetites and Imperfections, tho' they  
be never so small, is more commendable and  
glorious, than to take the strongest Towns,  
(*Prov. 16. v. 32.*) than to triumph over the  
greatest Armies, than to work the greatest  
Miracles, or even raise the Dead out of their  
Graves. All which Things, and others of  
like Nature are not discerned by us, because  
we do not enter into ourselves to weigh them  
well as we ought, and as they really are in  
themselves; we permit our Fancy to be  
prevented, prepossessed and surprized with  
some sensual Affection towards them, which  
so darkens and clouds our Understandings,  
that they are incapable of making a right  
Judgment of those Objects as they should,  
and they truly deserve.

Wherefore

Wherefore be attentive to what I am about to tell you, it being of great Importance. The *Means* to know the true Nature and different Properties of things that occur in your daily Transactions, is by taking a special care to bridle your Affections, and keep your Will free from fixing its Love upon any thing which is not immediately directed towards God himself, or to the means that may lead you to him; for to judge well of the Object that presents its self, your *Understanding* should first well consider it, before you let your *Will* make its choice or dislike of it; because when the *Will* hath once fastned its Affection upon the Object, the *Understanding* is very much hindered from coming to a true Knowledge thereof; by reason that the Consent of the Will intervening leaves it so involved and obscured, that it appears much better and fairer to the *Understanding*, than it is in its self: And hence it happens that the Object being thus falsely represented to the Will, becomes too passionately beloved and embraced without due enquiry into its real Goodness; and the more vehement the Desire or Love of the Will is, so much the more grossly is the *Understanding* clouded in its Judgment; and being so deceived, invites the Will to an Increase of *Affection* towards it. So that these two chief Powers of Man's Soul, miserably deceived and misled, walk continually as in a Labyrinth from one Darkness into another, and fall from one Error into others much greater.

Text.  
A necessary Caution to keep the will from fixing its Love.

Till the Understanding has first considered the Object.

The  
same cau-  
tion is ne-  
cessary al-  
so in  
things  
that are  
Good.

Take heed therefore of fastning your Affection upon any thing before it be well weighed and Examined by the Understanding, and recommended to God in Prayer, that you may truly discern whether it be good or evil; and I exhort you to do thus, not only in all indifferent Things, but even in them also which are good and holy; for tho' they are evidently good in themselves, yet they may prove otherwise to you, by reason of some Circumstance of Time, Place, Measure, &c. For which reason it often happens, that many have endangered themselves in the most commendable Employments.

The  
Under-  
standing  
is also to  
be wean-  
ed from  
Curiosity.

You must also in the second Place warily refrain and disentangle vour Understanding from *Curiosity*, least it draw and retain that in the Soul, which may retard you in your intended Victory; for a curious Enquiry after earthly Things, which are neither profitable, nor useful, nor pertinent to your spiritual purpose is generally the Poyson of the Spirit. Restrain therefore your Understanding as prudently as you can, and strive to wean it from all sorts of Curiosity, till by degrees all the Novelty and Changes in the World may become very indifferent to you; so that whether they be great or small, if they do not concern you, you will not much mind them; and when you must needs hear or regard them, let your Will be always upon it's Guard; nay, it will be best even in the Knowledge of Heavenly Things to be sober, and humble, and content your self

And  
made sim-  
ple and in-  
different  
in world-  
ly things.



self with the Knowledge of your crucified Saviour, and his Blessed Life and Death, preserving a moderate desire after all other Things: For if you have sufficient Knowledge to enflame your Hearrs with the Love of God and Hatred of your own Corruption, think you are wise enough, and as acceptable to God as those that know a great deal more. Besides, in a curious Search of all other Knowledge, there is too often much Self-Love, and a certain pernicious Pride secretly lurking.

If you thus wean your Understanding from these Curiosities, you will happily escape many dangerous Snares. For as the Devil observes the Will and Resolution of those that apply themselves to a spiritual Life very strong and difficult to be overcome, he bends all his Endeavours against their Understanding, that so he may by little and little make himself Master of both the one and the other. To this end he suggests curious and sublime Notions to those that are quick, ingenious, witty, and of large Capacities, that being taken up with a false and imaginary Perswasion, that they are in the true Enjoyment of God, they may forget the Care they ought to have of purifying their Hearts, the Resignation of their Wills, the Mortification and Knowledge of themselves. Thus they become ensnared with Pride, and set up a certain Idol of their own Wisdom; whence it follows, that if they do not take heed, they come by little and to perswade themselves, that they have no

Which is need of the Counsel or Direction of others; far more which is an Evil very dangerous, and hard dangerous and to be cured; since the Pride of the Understanding is far more pernicious than that to be cured of the Will; for he that is proud only in his Will, will submit sometimes to the Judgment of others. But as for him that is puffed up with the Pride of his Understanding, and assuredly believes his Opinion to be the best, what Hope is there of his Cure? How shall he be brought to submit to anothers Judgment, since he thinks none so wise as himself? For when the Understanding (which is the Eye of the Soul, and should see and correct its secret Pride) is it self blind, and blown up with Presumption, when Light itself is become Darknes, and the very Rule crooked, you may easily conceive what the End of those things is like to be. Wherefore take care betimes to prevent this dangerous Pride, before it pierce you, as I may say, to the Marrow; moderate the Vivacity of your own Spirit, and willingly submit to the Counsel and Judgment of others; become a Fool in your own Conceit for the Love of God, and by this means you will become truly Wise.

## C H A P. V.

*Of the Will, and the End to which we are to direct all our Actions.*

**I**N order to become one Spirit with God, 'tis not enough to have good Designs, and a ready Disposition to good Works; we must also do them from the Motion of his Spirit, and with a desire of pleasing him only. In doing this we must expect to have violent Conflicts with our own corrupt Nature, which in all our Actions and Omissions seeks her own Convenience and Complacency: Nay, more in things spiritual than any other. Hence it is, that when we propose to perform any thing as from God's Will and Pleasure, we readily accept and consent to it, but oftentimes not as a thing pleasing to God, or commanded by him; but rather, *because we fix our Minds upon the Satisfaction and Content which is got by doing the Will of God.*

A will to do well is not sufficient. But our Actions must be performed only to please God.

Which that you may attain to.

To avoid therefore this Snare which may hinder you from advancing in the way of Perfection, and by degrees to accustom your self to Will, and to do all things as excited by the Spirit of God, and with a pure Intention to please him only, who should be the Principle and End of all our Actions and Designs, it will be necessary for you to observe this Method: When a thing is presented unto you to be done which is agreeable to the divine Will, first lift up your

Apply your Understanding to



*Of the End of our Actions.*

Understanding unto God, before you permit your Will to accept it, that you may clearly discern that it is the divine Pleasure that you should perform it, and that it is for his Honour to please him; and then your Will being thus drawn and moved by the divine Will, ought to endeavour to pursue it, for this End and Intention, because God will have it so for his Honor and Glory.

And take heed of being deceived.

Likewise when you would omit, or refuse a thing contrary to, or not according to the Will of God, do not immediately set about or reject it, till you have directed the Eye of your Understanding to the divine Will, as you are before instructed; and take care over yourself least you be deceived; because it may seem many times to you that you act, or omit this or that according to the Will and Pleasure of God, when indeed it

Because Nature is subject to seek her self.

is otherwise; for Nature doth so secretly seek her self in all our Actions, that those very things which we think please or displease us only for the Love of God, are most commonly desired or refused out of

The intention of doing all for God, is very good to be made in the entrance to any work,

some self interest: Wherefore in the beginning of any Action, remove from your Mind as much as you can possibly all Intentions which may have this Mixture of *Self-interest*; nor do you adventure to act or omit any thing, till you feel and find your self inwardly moved to begin and go on with it, purely out of Obedience to the Will of God.

But

But if you want time and leisure to make this actual Intention, and to consider the *Causes* moving you to do or omit any thing, take care to do it when Occasion gives you leave, and then content your self with a virtual Intention to seek only God's Pleasure and Honour in every one of your Actions and Omissions. But in other Affairs, which admit of more Deliberation, let this formal and express Intention be made in the beginning of them, and in things of a long continuance, this Intention is to be often *renewed*; least after a good beginning, some false or perverse Intention insinuate it self into your Mind; and thus you may shun the secret Deceits of your own Nature, which is too prone to seek her self, as ordinarily to change thro' length of time our best Intentions, from their first proposed Objects.

And to be often renewed in the progress of it.

So that a Servant of God, who is not very watchful may often begin a good Work, and intend to perform it according to the Divine Will, and yet afterwards without perceiving it, he may so *please himself* in what he has done, that he may wholly forget his first Design of doing it only for the Honour of God. And thus by little and little he may become so abandoned to the Satisfaction, Pleasure, Profit, or Honour accrewing to himself from these Actions, that if he chance to be hindered from continuing them by means of Sickness or other Accidents, he presently becomes troubled, dejected, and disquieted,

Least self-ends creep in, and so change and corrupt the Purity of our first Intentions.

nor can he without great Difficulty be brought to his first pure Intention of *doing* or *suffering*, what God would have him out of Obedience to him.

He that does all things purely to please God, remains in a perfect peace and indifference. And has always what he desires.

Whence it manifestly appears that his Intention was not pure: For whosoever follows Gods Motion, and desires only to please him, does not fix his Affection upon one thing more than another; but is ready to have this, do that, or leave the other thing in such a manner, time and circumstance as it pleaseth God; so that he remains in such an *Indifferency*, that whether he hath it or not, he is equally pleased and pacified, always Quiet and Content. Because, however it falls out, he hath what he desires, and enjoys the *End* he aimed at, which was no other, than *to be conformable to the Will of God*.

Therefore this right intention is of great importance.

In all your Actions therefore and Omissions carefully cherish this right Intention: For it is not to be expressed what Strength, Efficacy and Comfort it will afford you; insomuch as the very least and meanest thing thus performed (to please God) and for his Glory, is of more and higher Value in his sight, than the most heroick Actions which are done without it.

The purity of Intention may be kept even in things aiming at our own good.

But if the hopes of Eternal Happiness, or the Fear of Punishment (which more particularly respect your own Interest) put you upon doing any thing that is good, yet even in this also you may make God's holy Will your End, since he desires our Happiness, and that we should escape  
Eternal



Eternal Damnation ; and thus you will keep alive in your Heart this holy Motive upon all occasions ; of the Importance whereof I need not inlarge this Discourse, it being most certain, that as the most holy and heroick Action becomes not only defective and unvaluable, if it be not done for a good end, but even sinful if it be directed to an ill end ; so, on the contrary, the smallest and least Action, hath an inestimable Price and Value when done with an Intention simply for God and his good Will and Pleasure : Insomuch, that a single Penny bestowed on the Poor, is more acceptable to the Divine Majesty, when given purely to please him, than if the same Person should give away his whole Estate for any other *by or self-ends* whatsoever.

This Exercise of sacrificing our selves, and all our Actions purely to please God, of sighing always after God, of seeking him in every thing we do or omit ; and to aspire continually to God with lively Affections, as to our most amiable and only good, who so much deserves from all his rational Creatures, this Honour, Love and Service above all other things) may seem at first very difficult ; but a little use will render it easy, and the frequent Consideration of God's infinite worth, will so inflame the Will in the Production of the aforesaid Acts of Fervor and Affection, that we shall with much ease and speed get a habit of doing all things for his sake who only deserves it. To which also the

And it puts such a worth upon our actions. That the best without it, is lost and may be sinful, and the smallest with it, is very acceptable to God.

If this Exercise seem hard at first yet Use will render it easy. And soon get a habit in our Souls.

following Reflections upon our own Obligations to do it will not a little conduce :

For who can choose but be perswaded to seek, and will, the pure Honour of God with an entire Resignation to the Orders of his Divine Providence in all things, if he often call to his Remembrance *how much he hath first honoured and loved him* ? In our Creation, he made us of nothing to be like himself, and all other Creatures to serve us : In our Redemption he sent no Angel, but his only Son to pay our Ransom, not by the corruptible Value of Gold and Silver, but by the infinite Price of his most precious Blood, and by his painful and ignominious Death, 1 *Pet.* 1. 18, 19. *Phil.* 2. 8. In our Preservation, each day, hour and Moment, fighting our Battels for us against our Enemies, preventing and accompanying us with his Heavenly Grace, and leaving with us his dear Son, always ready for our Support and Sustainance in the Holy Sacrament. These Favours and many more are evident Signs of the love and value which our great Creator has to us his poor and wretched Creatures ; and are in themselves such inestimable Benefits, that none but his Divine Understanding is capable to comprehend the least of them. And how much are we bound in Exchange to do for so excellent a Majesty who has done such great things for us ? For if Kings and Princes receiving Honour from private Persons, think themselves bound to return them

Especially if we consider how our dear Lord has loved us,

Which appears in our Redemption.

Preservation.

And many other Benefits.

Which are so great that none but God can comprehend them.

them reciprocal Honour : What ought our Vileness to endeavour towards the supreme Monarch of the Universe ; who has so highly exalted us ?

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C H A P. VI.

*Of two Wills that are in Man, and the continual Strife, and Combat between them.*

**Y**OU are to take notice that there are <sup>Two</sup> *two Wills* in Man : The one of Reason, which is therefore called *Rational* or <sup>Wills Rational and Sensual.</sup> Superior, the other of Sense, and so is called *Sensual* or inferior, and sometimes goes under the name of *Sensuality, Appetite, Concupiscence, the Flesh, Passion, and the like* : And tho' each of these is in Man, yet because we are not properly to be said to be *Men*, more than we act as rational Creatures, we cannot say that we truly will or choose any thing, if we will it only by the Will of *Sense*, or unless the Superior, or rational Will also gives its joyn't Consent.

In this Diversity therefore consists principally all our Spiritual War, that our superior Will, and Reason, being as it were in the middle between God's Will which is above it, and our Sensuality which is inferior to it, is perpetually assaulted and invited by one and the other, which endeavour each of them on his side to draw it, and make it subject and obedient to it self.

The Rational is seated between God's Grace and our Sensuality.

Now



following Reflections upon our own Obligations to do it will not a little conduce :

Especially if we consider how our dear Lord has loved us, For who can choose but be perswaded to seek, and will, the pure Honour of God with an entire Resignation to the Orders of his Divine Providence in all things, if he often call to his Remembrance *how much he hath first honoured and loved him* ? In our Creation, he made us of nothing to be like himself, and all other Creatures to serve us :

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The Rational is seated between God's Grace and our Sensuality.

Now

And the truly virtuous yield readily to God's Will.

And the vicious to their Sensuality. But they who of Sinners are become Converts, have the greatest Conflict.

Who must therefore resolve to bear patiently the loss of their Pleasures.

Now this Combat is not very difficult to them, who are either truly virtuous, or wholly given up to their Vices : For the *virtuous* come no sooner to the Knowledge of God's holy Will, but they presently yield their Consent, and bridle their Sensuality : On the contrary, the *vicious* act without scruple, according to their Appetite, checking the Motions of the holy Spirit, which contradicts it : They therefore chiefly feel the greatest Troubles and Difficulties, who have been great Sinners, and have contracted ill Habits ; especially at first when they are resolved upon Amendment and a more perfect Course of Life, and to this end separate themselves from worldly and carnal delights, to be the more at leisure to love and serve God for the future ; because the inward drawing of God's Will, which their superior Will receives from above ; and the Motions and Contradictions of their Sensuality, which it suffers from below, are so importunate and violent on each side, that the *reason* between them both is often brought into extreme Streights and Perplexities. Wherefore, let none think to obtain this Victory, who is not prepared and resolved to support patiently all such Pains and Crosses as he must feel, in leaving those Pleasures, his Affections are and have been much fastned to. For this reason so very few attain to true Perfection, because finding a great deal of Trouble in the beginning of their Conversion, and in getting rid of their depraved Affections and Desires ;



Desires; they do not stand firm to their Resolutions in these Attacks (which are inevitable, when we resist so many Motions of our corrupt Wills and Sensuality) but rather like cowardly Soldiers they quit the Field, and yield up themselves with their Arms to the tyrannous Insults of their Enemies.

There are many who indeed would not be guilty of Robbery, nor unjust Gain; but yet have their Affections excessively fixt upon those things they have a just Title to: So likewise there are those that would not purchase Honours or Preferments unlawfully, but they love and desire them passionately: They will keep to their appointed Fast-days very punctually, but take no care to mortify their Passions; They will live temperately and chastly, but are loath to leave pleasing Company, which hinders their Union with God, and greatly retards them in their Tendency to Perfection. From all which, and the like petty Affections, it follows that the good Works they do, are performed with a certain *Irkfomness of Mind*, and are accompanied with divers Self-interests and secret Imperfections, with great Self-conceit, and Complacence in their own Actions, and with an earnest Desire to be liked and approved by others: But all these not only make no Progress in the way of Spirituality, but rather go backwards, and are in eminent Danger of falling into their former vicious Courses, because they have not yet a right Taste of true tuality.

Several  
sorts of  
unmorti-  
fy'd Per-  
sons.

Whose  
Affe-  
ctions  
are ac-  
compa-  
ny'd with  
many  
Imperfe-  
ctions.

And who  
make no  
Progress  
in Spiri-  
tuality.

But are  
full of  
Ignorance  
and  
Blindness.

A Danger  
in the  
choice of  
Spiritual  
Exercises  
discove-  
red.

true Virtue ; but behave themselves ungratefully to their merciful Creator, who hath freed them from the Tyranny of the Devil. They are likewise under very great Ignorance and Darkness ; neither understanding nor seeing their Danger, but falsely and foolishly fancying themselves to be in a State of Security.

This dangerous Deceit and pernicious Error very few take notice of ; for which reason it is that many of those that apply themselves to a Spiritual Life, out of Self-love, make choice of such Exercises as are most pleasing to themselves, rather than those that are most profitable to their Souls ; when indeed, they ought to begin with the Knowledge of themselves, and of what may root out their Passions, irregular Inclinations, and sensual Appetites ; against which they ought according to all the Laws of Reason to bend their Endeavours, and all the Effort of their Combat, till they are entirely subdued as far as is possible in this Life.

## C H A P. VII.

*Of the manner of fighting against sensual Motions, and of the Acts that the Will must produce to acquire a Habit of Virtue.*

When  
your Sen-  
suality  
rebels.

**A**S often as you feel your self assaulted by the Motions of *Sensuality*, turn your Mind

Mind immediately to God, and if you would follow his Will, who on his part calls you to oppose and resist your sensual Desires, you must practice these Exercises :

First as soon as the Temptation is perceived, you must make a strong and *generous Resistance*, least your superior Will or Reason yield any Consent unto it. And if any Remainder of such Motions continue to disturb you, having gain'd a little ground, Repel them again with more Force and Vigour. But if they still persist to arise and assault you, then that you may have occasion to get the more Mastery over them, cast them from you with all the Horror and Disdain you can. And this way is to be used against all the Temptations, and unruly Affections of Sensuality : Except only the Motions of the Flesh ; whereof I shall speak more hereafter in its place. In short, it must be your continual Exercise to produce frequent and fervent Acts of those Virtues which are contrary to the Temptations of the Sensual Appetite ; for example, suppose you are tempted to *Impatience*, if you diligently observe what passes in your interior, you will there perceive that the Temptations to Impatience do continually torment and assault your superior Will, to oblige it to yield and condescend to what they desire. You must therefore redouble the Fervor of your Will, to contradict and resist the least Motions of the said Temptations, and producing Acts that are directly contrary to them, that your

Secure your Reason from consenting by a vigorous Resistance. If the Motion continues suppress it more forceably again, to get a perfect hatred of it. And produce Acts of those Virtues which are contrary to these Vices.

supe-



superior Will may not consent to them, you must never give over fighting, till you see your Enemy conquered and dying, and being unable to prevail against you, yield you the Victory.

But be-  
ware of  
your Ene-  
my, who  
sometimes  
suppress  
these Mo-  
tions.

But further you are to know, that when the Devil perceives us so constantly and vigorously to oppose such Suggestions, Passions and Affections, he treacherously seems to withdraw himself for a time, and leaves stirring them up, least by the continual Exercise of our Reason against them we should get the habit of these Virtues, which are opposite to those Passions:

And do  
not let  
slip the  
least oc-  
casion of  
exercise.

And fight-  
ing with  
your Ene-  
mies.

Till you  
get a per-  
fect hatred  
of them.

You are therefore to be very wary, that you let not any occasion slip of acquiring these Virtues: At which times when you see your sensitive Part the least moved or stirred up, and evil Thoughts ascending from it into your Mind, be stedfast in opposing them in the beginning of the Fight, with all the Warmth and Vigor you can, and repress these evil Suggestions; boldly denying them any Entrance or Continuance, repeating this upon all such occasions so long, till you find that you are become Master of your self.

Now as it happens very often that not driving away our Enemies with hatred enough, but only perhaps because we know we do well in it, and that it pleases God, we run the Risque of being overcome again by them some time or other. We must endeavour to pursue and drive them far from us, with Acts not only of Resis-

*stance*

stance, but also of *Disdain* and *Abhorrence*, till we at last come to have a true and perfect hatred of them.

*Lastly*, That you may adorn your Soul with a Habit of Virtue, 'tis not enough to oppose our unruly Passions, and evil Affections, by all those Exercises we have been speaking of; you must also frequently make Acts of all those Virtues which are contrary to them; as thus, if any one gives you an occasion of Impatience, think it not enough for you to conquer that Passion according to the Rules afore delivered, but force yourself to receive *Content in the Trouble* that is past, in the Resolution of suffering more or greater of the like Nature, or any other; you should also constrain your self to converse lovingly. speak kindly, serve heartily that very Person whose Behaviour has thus moved your Impatience.

The reason why such contrary Acts are necessary to perfect our Virtue, is because the Root from which our Vices proceed, can by no other means so fully be extirpated; therefore (to continue the same Example :) altho' when we are slighted and despised, we do not yield to the Motions of Impatience, but beat it down with the forementioned Weapons; yet if we do not *habituate* our selves to make this Contempt easie to us, we shall never be wholly freed from the Vice of Impatience; Which (by reason of our natural Proneness to seek the Increase of our Reputation and Honour :) is founded in the Abhorrence of all Contempt; and so long

Is, that as this vicious Root remains alive, it will whilst the Root of Vice remains alive in us, it will still bud forth and choke our Virtues: as this vicious Root remains alive, it will be still putting forth and make our Virtues weak and languishing, and sometimes choke them up; besides, it puts us to perpetual danger of Relapses upon all occasions which are presented unto us; so that without the Practice of such contrary Acts, we can never obtain the true Habits of Virtue.

Therefore And you are further to be instructed, that we must these Acts must be so *fervent, frequent, and* make many Acts *numerous*, that they may be capable to destroy the vicious Habit; which having got the Possession of our Hearts by many vicious Acts, must then be forc'd out by many Acts of a contrary Nature, that the desired virtuous Habit may be let in, and implantd in its room. And there will be required more good Acts to obtain a Habit of Virtue, than vicious Acts for the Habit of Vice, because those are not assisted (as these are) by Nature corrupted with Sin. I add to all this, that if the Virtue which you practice requires it, you are to make outward Acts

That we may implant a Habit of Virtue. conformable to the inward: As in the afore-said Case, you must use Words of Love and Sweetness, and strive to find some occasion of serving him whom you take for your Opposite and Enemy.

And these Acts must be sometimes external as well as internal. And altho' these Practices be accompanied with so much Coldness and Deadness, that it seems as if you did them entirely against your Heart, yet by no means omit them; for as *weak* as they are, they will support

Which is indeed full of trouble, but very profitable.

port



port you in the Combat, and open your way to the Victory.

You are also to take care, not only to resist the great and efficacious Motions of Vice and manifest Wickedness, but even the least and smallest Passions and disordered Motions; For these are but the Fore-runners of the greater, opening the Door for them to steal in upon us unawares, and so to precipitate us into all Vices. And it oftentimes falls out that those who slight these little Suggestions, and do not mind to dig them up by the Roots, when they afterwards least suspect it, have been surprized and overturned by their greatest Enemies more violently than at first.

You must be diligent also against the least evil Motions.

Lastly: You ought also to mortifie and deny your self, even in the desire of *things lawful*, and permitted, when they are not necessary: For this will enable you without any trouble to deprive your self of things forbidden, and you will do that which is very acceptable to God.

Nay even against lawful Affections when they are not necessary.

And now if you will but try and put these Exercises in Practice, I do not question, but by God's Grace assisting you, you will become very *spiritual* in a little time: But if you will needs take other Methods, and follow other Exercises, tho' they should seem so excellent and agreeable, as if you had a familiar Acquaintance, with your crucified Saviour; yet take care of resting or pleasing your self in much delicious ways, thinking they are the true way to Perfection: For as a habit of Vice proceeds from

For this is the way to become truly Spiritual.

the frequent Acts of our superiour will, consenting to the Inferiour Appetite of Sensuality ; so on the contrary, the Habit of Virthe is begotten in our Souls by often submitting and conforming our Will to the divine Will ; and as our Will can never be truly good and virtuous, nor united to God, tho' it receive from him never so holy and heavenly Inspirations, and be drawn by the impulse of his Will to all its Actions and Omissions, unless it consent to the divine Operations within it self ; so neither can it be termed vicious and separated from God, tho' never so much tempted and troubled by our Sensuality, if it does not obey and yield willingly and deliberately to it.

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### C H A P. VIII.

*What we must do when our Superiour Will, or Reason seems to be overcome by our Inferiour Will or Sensuality.*

As long as your will does not consent to your sensuality fear not.

**I**F you sometimes fear that your rational or superiour Will can no longer resist, or hold out against those violent Inclinations that assault it, because you cannot feel in your self such efficacious Desires to oppose them, be not troubled nor lose Courage, but stand as fast as you can, still fighting on with Constancy : For as long as your Reason keeps her self from *consenting* visibly to those Motions of Sensuality, so long you may esteem your self to have the better of the

the Field: For as it is not necessary that our inferiour Will should concur with our Superior in our Actions, nor does our Victory consist in feeling no perverse Passions in our Sensuality; our Reason may truly will and choose a thing or Action, as often as it pleaseth, notwithstanding the Rebellion and Resistance of Nature, the murmuring and Opposition of the World, and the Rage of the Devil.

For Victory consists not in feeling no Motions, but in not yielding.

If it sometimes happen that these Enemies should so suddenly and violently rush in upon you, and surprize your Reason, as to give it no respite to Produce such Acts of contrary Affections, whereby it might suppress their irregular Motions; in this Case make use of and defend your self with your Voice, saying: No, no, I will have nothing to do with you; and thus a Man would behave himself who is assaulted and oppressed by his outward Enemies: For his Sword proving useles in his defence, he strives with all his might to disengage himself, and step backwards that he may get ground and time to put himself in a Posture of Defence to resist and drive them away. Do you in like manner, O noble Souldier of Christ! First, give back a little in order to gain time to think upon your Weakness and Nothingness, and then retaking Courage by your Hope and Confidence in God, considering you are nothing, can do nothing, and he can do all things, and at the same time make a generous and brave Assault upon your Enemies, saying: *Lord help me, O God*

But if your enemies surprize your Reason.

Give back a little to gain time and strength.



*What we must do, when the Superior  
support me, Dear Jesus deliver me from this  
Danger!*

And if you have time help your self with Con- sideration. But if you have time given you to breath upon it, then you may strengthen and support your Will by a more deliberate Use and Application of your Understanding, fetching Strength from the Consideration of

those means which may be helpful against your Enemies : As for Example, if when you are under some Trouble, Affliction or Persecution ; *Impatience* is ready to overcome you, insomuch that your Will cannot, or at least will not bear it's Assaults, or dissemble it any longer, help your self presently with these following Thoughts, or the like :

1. Whether you have deserved this Affliction. If so, rest contented. If not, think of your former Sins.

*First*, consider whether or no you have any way deserved, or given just occasion for this Trouble or Persecution that has befallen you? If so, then you are by all means to rest contented, for it is very just and reasonable that you should patiently bear the Wounds you have given your self with your own Hands. But if it did not come by your own particular Fault, then remember and turn your Eyes upon your other Sins ; for which your gracious God hath not punished you as you deserve, nor you grieved for them as you ought : And thence conclude, since his Mercy has exchanged the Punishment they deserved which is Eternal, or at the least some long temporal Affliction, into this easie, short and fatherly Correction : What is more reasonable than that you should

should embrace it not only with a willing Mind, but also with a thankful Heart?

*Thirdly*, but if you should think, (which God forbid you should) that you have grieved sufficiently for your past Offences, and that you never committed any great ones; you are however to remember this, that none can enter into the Kingdom of God, but through the *narrow Path of Self-denial*, and of Patience in Tribulations *Matth. 7. 13. Luc. 9. 23.* And 'twas this way that Jesus Christ himself, and all his Blessed Saints ascended into Glory; *Luc. 24. 26.*

*Fourthly*, but suppose that you might find out some other way to Heaven, yet all the Laws of Love and Gratitude oblige you not to desire it; since the Son of God himself chose the way of the Cross, by which he would enter into his Kingdom, and for your sake, that you should imitate him, hath left you such a perfect Example of Patience. *1 Pet. 2. 21.*

*Lastly*, Amongst all the pious *Motives* and Meditations that you may use on these, or the like Occasions and Necessities, for the Support and Confirmation of your Will, this seems to be one of the most efficacious, to think how amiable and acceptable you are to God, how he delights in you and loves you, when he beholds you for his sake so resolutely engaged in this Warfare; so wholly bent upon rooting up all your corrupt Passions and Inclinations, and studying to plant solid Virtues in their places;

*How we ought to improve  
ces; and all this because you believe it to  
be his holy Will and Pleasure.*

## C H A P. IX.

*That we must not purposely avoid the occasions  
of Fighting.*

The way  
to get  
true vir-  
tue is not  
to avoid  
the occa-  
sions of  
fighting.

But ra-  
ther to  
seek them  
out.

Or an im-  
ployment  
that is a  
little te-  
dious to  
you.

**A**ND now besides all those Advices I have hitherto given for the adorning your Souls with Virtues; this you are to take as a short and certain Maxim, *that you neither fear nor avoid the occasions of fighting that are offer'd you*: For if you would have a Habit of any Virtue, as (for example of patience) your way is, not to shut your self up from conversing with others, or to shun those Persons, Actions, or Thoughts that are apt to move you to Impatience: No, you ought rather to seek them out, desire and love such Company and Conversation, as are the *Causes* of your Unquietness and Disturbance, and as often as you shall have occasion of Correspondence or Intercourse with them, prepare your self with a ready will to receive and endure patiently all Crosses and Troubles which they may any way bring upon you; and this will be the way to accustom your self to *patience*.

In like manner if any Business grows tedious and troublesome to you, either because the Person that commands or puts you upon it, displeaseth you, or because it is of it self offensive, or that you are thereby hindered from



from some other Imployment that you would please you better, yet leave it not upon any terms; but rather set sooner upon that, than any other, tho' it be never so wearisome or ungrateful, nay, altho' the leaving it undone, seems to settle and quiet your Mind; for otherwise you will never be able to get any degree of perfect Patience, this Peace being not at all solid, and your Heart not yet sincerely purified from your disorderly Passions.

And the same thing may be said concerning such Thoughts as sometimes trouble and disquiet your Mind, instead of rejecting them, you should kindly entertain them and treat them as grateful Guests; because the Trouble they bring upon you will enure you to the patient Suffering of things that are contrary to your humour, and whosoever teacheth you other Maxims, teacheth rather the manner of getting rid of the vexatious Thoughts that torment you, than the means of attaining the Virtue you desire to gain. Nevertheless it will be very convenient, or fitting for an unexperienced Souldier in the Christian Conflict warily and prudently to combat and defend himself in Encounters with wicked Thoughts. And therefore I counsel him sometimes to oppose them, other times to draw back a little, according as he is more or less advanced, in the acquiring of Virtues, but he is never so to turn his back upon them as to seek to be quit of all the Trouble, and Irksomness that may arise from them; for he that frees himself after  
this

And the same rule may be applied to troublesome thoughts.

Yet a young beginner must be wary in this War. But never to desert the field.

*Of the manner of resisting sudden Motions,*  
 this manner, as soon as he feels the next rising Motions of Impatience, having no strength or ground of the contrary Virtue, will be in great danger of laying down the Arms that he had took up for his defence.

This Advice has no regard to the Vice of *Impurity*, of which, as I have said, we shall treat elsewhere in a particular manner.

## C H A P. X.

*Of the manner of resisting sudden Motions of Passions.*

**I**F you have not yet steadiness enough to bear and repulse the unexpected blows of an injurious Tongue, or any other Cross, without Trouble and Regret, you may thus enure your self to it. First by a prudent *Forefight* of them, and many times *wishing* for them, before they come upon you and *waiting* for them, with a firm, resolute, and prepared Mind.

First you  
 are to  
 consider  
 your Sta-  
 tion &c.  
 that you  
 may fore-  
 see what  
 is like to  
 befall  
 you.

The manner of *foreseeing* them is to consider your Station, Profession and Humour, as also the Places and Company you frequent, or are likely to converse with; and thus you may easily *foresee*, what may probably befall you, and how you must carry your self, and fortifie your Mind against any sudden Surprizal of Passion, and if some Difficulties should happen, you did not think of, then besides the former Strength you had

pre-

prepared by your first Resolution to bear all cross Events with an Evenness of Mind. You may also further help your self by this Method.

When you begin to perceive the first rising of *Impatience* by being slighted, contemned or any way injured, presently enforce your Mind towards God, and think of the unspeakable Goodness and infinite Love he has for you, which inclined him to send you this Trouble and Adversity; and that by bearing it *patiently* for his Love, you may draw nearer, and be more perfectly united to him. And after you have thus concluded with your self, that this is his divine Will and Pleasure you should suffer it patiently; then reflect your Thoughts back again upon your self, and reproaching your Laziness, say in your Heart: Alas! Why do I mean to strive thus to cast off this Cross, which no Enemy, but my Heavenly Father hath laid upon me, as a Pledge of his Love; then turn to the *Cross* or Calamity which presseth you, salute it, embrace it, and receive it with all possible Joy and Alacrity. And if the Passion be so unruly and violent, that you cannot presently elevate your mind to God, but are perhaps wounded and almost worsted by it, endeavour nevertheless to do it the best that you can, as if you were not.

But if some cross unforeseen happens, fly to the thoughts of God's love and Providence.

Who sends it or permits it.

And be constant though almost conquered.

But the best remedy against sudden motions is to cut off these causes

But the most Sovereign and efficacious Remedy against these sudden and *unexpected* Motions is this: To take away in time the cause from whence they proceed, as if, when you



*Of the manner of resisting sudden Motions.*

are contradicted in any thing, the Affection you have for it, makes you commonly fall into a sudden Alteration of Mind, the way to be rid of the Trouble is, to cast off the Affection. But if this Trouble and Vexation ariseth not from the thing, but from the Person himself who displeases and moves you by every little Action, by reason of the little Solidness of your Mind to bear it; then the best Remedy is, to do violence to your own Inclination, and oblige your Will *to love and wish well to that Person.*

For besides that he is a Creature framed as you are, by the Almighty Hand of God, and redeemed by the same precious Ransome of your dear Saviours Blood, he also presents you with a happy Occasion, if you can love it, and lay hold of it, to imitate the Example of God himself, who is good and gracious to all.

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C H A P. XI.

*Of the manner of fighting or subduing the Lust of the Flesh or Concupiscence.*

In this War you must change your weapon.

**T**HIS Vice is to be resisted after a particular manner very different from the rest; and therefore you are to take notice of these *several times*, that is, *before* the Temptation, *when* you are tempted, and *after* it is over and left you.

*Before*

Before the Temptations of this kind Assault you, you must not think of the Vice it self in order to fight with it, but only the *causes* from whence it may proceed. *First* then, avoid as much as you can the *Conversation* that may be never so little dangerous, and when you find your self engaged un-awares, keep your self upon your Guard, and shew your self as little complaisant as possible. Because this Enemy is not to be confronted, but avoided by all possible means; and we are to fear the meeting with any Person whatsoever whose Presence may put us in the least danger; and we must have a care of being presumptuous, because we do not presently feel the Sting of the Temptation: for this treacherous Vice makes it's Approaches most commonly by Stealth, and wounds us the more grievously, the more it covers it self under fine flattering and specious Pretences, whereby we neither distrust it's design, nor stand so warily upon our Guards to defend ourselves. So that there is oftentimes more cause of Fear, when our Visits and Familiarity are continued under the pretence of Lawfulness, of Obligation, and of Compliance, or even of Virtue in the Party whose Company we desire and love. For the poysonous Pleasure of our Sensuality is too apt to intermixt it self with this Affection, and insensibly stealing into the Heart, and penetrating by little and little into the very bottom of the Soul, at last darkens and obscures the reason, till it

And therefore before the Temptation you are not to think of the Vice, but avoid all occasions of procuring it; which are 1. Conversation.

This Enemy assaults us by stealth.

And under pretence of lawfulness, &c.

it begins to slight all Dangers, and so by degrees fall either into open Ruin, or at least into such troublesome Temptations, as are afterwards very hard to be conquered.

2. Sign of familiarity &c.

Therefore if you find your self engaged unawares in such Company, avoid all pleasant looks upon any such Persons or things, all shew of Familiarity, Courtship, or any Signs or Expression of Love or the like; but if you have some necessary business, with such a one, dispatch it with all speed, behaving your self with all Modesty and Gravity.

3. Idleness.

Thirdly, take heed of *Idleness*, and watch very diligently and constantly over your Actions and Thoughts, that you never act, or think, any thing unbeseeming your Christian State and Profession.

4. Rash Judgment of those that fall into this Vice.

Fourthly, Never judge rashly of your Neighbour, above all concerning this Vice. And though his Sin be manifest and cannot admit of an Excuse, you ought rather to compassionate his Case, and not censure him with Disdain, but from thence learn to humble and abase your self, acknowledging that you are no better your self than a little Dust and Ashes. And trembling with awful Fear, endeavour the more earnestly after a stricter Union with God in Prayer, lest you being tempted, should fall into the same Fault; for if you are ready to judge and slight others, God will punish you to your Cost, and permit you to fall in the same Vice or a worse, that you may truly learn to know and humble your self for your Pride and Presumption, and being thus humbled may the more diligently strive to remedy either of those



those Vices ; and if you do not fall, know that the Condition you are in, ought to make you fear the more.

*Lastly*, beware of *vain Complacency* in your self upon feeling any sensible Grace, or spiritual Comfort, or inward Delight in Devotion: perswade not your self that you are the more perfect for that, or that you will thenceforth have no Enemies to fight withal and conquer you ; but be always fearful and careful over your self.

5. Vain complacency.

2. In the time of Temptations, consider whether they proceed from an *external* or *internal* Cause. By *external* Causes, I mean *Conversation, Entertainments or Discourses*, that have a Tendency to this Vice, against which the true Remedy and best Security is, to fly from their Infection as you have heard before. By the *inward* Causes may be understood a vigorous Health and Disposition of Body, or such filthy Thoughts as come either from our former ill Customs, and neglecting to watch over our Senses, or else from the Devils Suggestion. As to the *Body* it must be kept under with fasting watching, and the like Mortifications and Austerities according to the Rules of Discretion ; and the Remedy for unclean Thoughts is *silent Prayer* and pious *Meditations*, diligent *Labour*, and continual Employment in Affairs agreeable to your Station.

In the time of Temptation mark the cause of it, whether external, and fly from it. Or inward.

And prevent or correct it by mortification. And Prayer and Meditation.

But I would not advise you to choose such points of Meditation as some Books may prescribe for Remedy of these Temptations, such as to consider the Baseness of carnal

But not as some Books prescribe.

Vices

Which  
may give  
occasion  
to Impu-  
rity.

But by  
Medita-  
ting on  
Christ  
Death  
and Passi-  
on.

Vices and their Insatiableness, the great Shame and Danger which of Necessity accompany them; and lastly, the Ruin of Reputation and Estate, Discontents and temporal Inconveniencies, and such like. For though those are good Meditations, yet they are not proper means to be used in conquering of these Temptations, the true and proper Remedy being to fly not only from the least Thoughts of this Sin, but also from all things that may cause them, tho' they seem never so contrary or opposite. For though such Meditations as these may be able to drive them away; yet at the same time it fastens such Fancies in the Memory, that there are just Grounds to fear falling into Delight thereof.

Wherefore let the Subject Matter of your Meditations, for this purpose, be rather the *Mysteries of the Passion and Death of our Saviour Jesus Christ*; and if Temptations of that Nature do also in these pious Meditations intrude themselves (against your Will) and disquiet you more than ordinary (as I am assured they will, notwithstanding all your Care) yet be not out of Heart, nor leave off your well begun Meditations, nor think it worth while to resist or dispute with these flying Thoughts; but proceed constantly in what you are about, taking no more notice of these Fancies, than if you never had them in your Mind. And this is the best and most secure way to conquer unclean Thoughts, though never so importunate and troublesome;

troublesome ; and never stay to examine them, to know whether you have given your Consent to them or not ; for this is a cunning Deceit of the Devil, who under the Appearance of good, lies waiting to ensnare and bring you into Inconveniences, which at another time, when you are at quiet, and free from these troublesome Temptations, will be easily perceived.

As concerning *Prayer*, another Remedy against this Vice, it is best made by often lifting up your Mind to God by fervent Aspirations and Ejaculations, with a virtual Intention only to pray for Victory over these your Enemies without any actual Reflection upon the Temptations of the Vice it self. Beware therefore of being too busie in confessing or descending to particulars of this Nature in your Prayers, to shew as it were their Baseness and your Misery, by reflecting upon special Circumstances ; for this may endanger your falling into new Delight ; and this will suffice for your Defence in time of Temptation.

*Lastly*, After the Temptation is past, think not that you are presently safe and secure from the same Assaults ; but stand upon your Guard, and endeavour as much as you can, to forget those Objects which occasioned the Temptations, tho' you find your self never so much inclined to it upon the Pretence of Virtue or Piety to do the contrary ; for all this is but the secret Perswasion of our corrupted Nature, and a strong Delusion of the Devil.

And do not stay, to dispute with carnal Temptations.

And in Prayer make no actual and particular Reflections upon them.

After the Temptation is past, stand upon your Guard.



## C H A P. XII.

*How to fight against Negligence and Idleness.*

Be readily  
obedient  
to good  
Inspira-  
tions.

**T**O secure your self from falling into this pernicious Vice employ all your Endeavours, to correspond readily with all sorts of good and holy Inspirations, and to decline all earthly Satisfactions, and Curiosities, and superfluous Affairs not belonging to your State and Calling.

To begin  
a good  
work spe-  
dily in its  
due time.

Is of great  
confe-  
quence to  
overcome  
Idleness.

Concerning which ready Correspondency with God's holy Inspirations, take this Rule: *Be sure not to defer the Undertaking and Beginning of that thing, which you are certainly satisfied you ought to do in its proper Place and Time.* For I assure you this Delay in beginning any Business will prove an irrecoverable Loss in the Progress thereof; because one short lingring calls on a second, which invites a third, and that attended by another, and so you will pass on to admit of more; to which your Nature will consent more easily than to the first, as having tasted the Bait, and swallowed down the seeming Pleasures of this loytering. Whence it follows, that you either go about your Exercise, when it is too late, or wholly lay it aside, because you find your self so much disgusted with it. Thus by little and little, and almost insensibly, creeps in this ill Habit of Negligence, and we content our selves with this Conceit, that we will do it more carefully and diligently another time.

time. Take heed therefore of this subtle Enemy, which not only infects the *Will*, by making it loath the Action, but also blinds the *Understanding*, that we do not apprehend the Vanity of these ill-grounded Maxims; to fancy the doing of our Duty another time more devoutly and diligently, will be well enough; when we have time now to perform it; and so we voluntarily leave it, or negligently delay it.

Wherefore having courageously begun any good Work, continue it *carefully*, till you have made an end of it, but not too *hastily*; so as to hurry your Mind, or prejudice the Action; or to imitate the Fault and Idleness of those, who out of Slothfulness think upon nothing but quickly to make an end of what they are about, taking no care whether it will be well done, but only striving to dispatch it in all haste, that they may the sooner enjoy their Quiet and Repose, which is so agreeable to their Temper.

And because there is no better Remedy to recover one that is subject to this sluggish Vice, than to settle him to work; (and he that is slothful hates all Sorts of Employments let them be never so good, having his Thought more upon the Labour he must undergo, than the Benefit that attends it;) therefore this Good must be discovered and made apparent to him, by shewing him the Necessity of it, and the infinite Good there is, even in one hearty Elevation of the Mind to God, or one little Action done for his

And having courageously set upon it, prosecute it carefully.

The Fruit of good works must be discovered.

*How to fight against Idleness.*

Honour; it being of more Worth than all the Wealth and Treasures of the World.

And as often as we use a certain Force and Violence with our selves, in a diligent Care about our Business and Duty, so often we shall find an unspeakable Good by getting a glorious Victory over our selves, and enriching our Souls with Virtue. But as for those, who will still continue tepid and negligent, God by little and little withdraws those Graces which he had formerly given them, and bestows [them upon those who better deserve them.

And the  
trouble  
disguised.

And as for the Trouble that attends the Prosecution of vicious Practices, it must be dexteriously covered and disguised, that it may seem much less than it is: As for Example, suppose you would employ your self an Hour in Prayer, and that seems too long to your lazy Disposition, use this pious Discretion, and perswade your self, that if you should spend half a quarter of an Hours time well in Prayer, you will after that leave off. And when this is past, get your Body to have Patience a little longer before you make an end: and so continuing from one quarter to another, the whole Hour will soon pass away, and your Sloth insensibly baffled. But if nevertheless you find too much difficulty in this Exercise, or a real Disability of Body to go through with it; set yourself a less Task for fear of wholly disgusting your self, and bring your self to it by degrees, till at last you will be accustomed

Unless  
there be a  
real disability.



customed to perform them with much Ease and Alacrity.

This, I say, in Condescension to your Weakness: But if you would *habituate* your self to make all Labour light, and all Pains pleasant, the best, tho' a very difficult way, is to get before it, expect it and cheerfully embrace it at the first Encounter; by which means you will find the Tedioufness in the doing it, will be turned into Quiet and Content; since what you are doing, you do willingly, whereas on the contrary if you avoid Trouble and Labour, it will not only be irksome when it comes to you; but the very Apprehension of it will be apt to disturb your Quiet, and the Fear of it will so continually oppress your Mind, that you will even abhor all taking of Pains, as a thing that is burthensome to you, and still dread the Occurrence of such Occasions, Persons or Objects as are like to put it upon you.

But the best way to get a custom of enduring Hardship, is to expect crosses continually.

And not avoid them.

The Reason I so much press this Point, Negligence and inveigh against this common Vice of *Negligence*, is because it is seldom perceived, and yet mighty prejudicial to most Persons; for it pursues us so secretly and subtilly, and gains ground upon us so treacherously, that by degrees it gnaws out the very Root of all our Spirituality, and insensibly infects the best of our Piety and Devotion.

Negligence is highly prejudicial to Perfection.

And our Enemy hath no better, or more alluring Bait to entice any one into his treacherous Snares, and especially those that aim at a spiritual Life. Be therefore

And the most alluring Bait of our Enemy.

very vigilant, pray often, and heartily; be  
 Therefore diligent in good Works, and make the best  
 take time use you can of the time that is before you;  
 ly care to prepare against the Marriage Day, that  
 prevent it. you may be ready to go forth to meet the  
 Bridegroom: Consider that God, who has  
 given you this day, has not promised you  
 another; therefore improve each moment to  
 advantage, and remember the strict account  
 which will then be required of you. To  
 conclude: *You are to give that day for lost,*  
*though you have dispatch'd never so many Af-*  
*fairs, wherein you have not made some Progress in*  
*Virtue, and gotten some Victory over your Enemies.*

And ac-  
 count  
 that day  
 lost in  
 which  
 you have  
 not done a  
 good  
 action.

## C H A P. XIII.

*How to govern our Sensuality.*

**Y**OU must keep a very strict Guard over  
 your *Senses*, that whereas they are or-  
 dinary the Door whereby the Devil en-  
 ters into your Heart, they may rather serve  
 as an Entrance for God and holy Thoughts.

Therefore in all your necessary Engage-  
 ments among earthly Creatures, be sure to  
 have your *Heart free and disengaged from them*,  
 and your Affections often elevated to God;  
 look upon him hidden in the Creature,  
 as in his own Work: Then returning into  
 your self, and considering, that the same  
 Lord is within you also, you may say to  
 him: *O Merciful and Eternal Lord God, thou*  
*art ever present with me, thou art more within*  
*me,*

Keep your  
 Heart dis-  
 engaged  
 from  
 earthly  
 Creatures.

me, than I am in myself, and yet ungrateful and forgetful Wretch that I am, I neither think upon thee, nor love thee, nor honour thee, as I ought!

2. Sometimes you may elevate your Thoughts to the Contemplation of God's incomprehensible Perfections, and endeavour to rejoyce in his Greatness and Glories, more than in any thing you have of your own; and be more pleased, that he is incomprehensible in his Majesty, than if he were within the reach of your Understanding and Capacity.

And Contemplate. your Creators greatness.

3. And when you remark, or observe in the Rational Creatures, any Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Righteousness, or any other Perfections; lift up your Mind to God, as the Author of them, and say within your self: *Behold these, O my God are the little Rivulets flowing out of thee, the true living and Eternal Fountain, and immense Ocean of all Good.*

And reduce all Created perfection to him the Fountain.

4. But when you find your self drawn and delighted by the Beauty of any Creature, pass presently to the Consideration of the supreme Beauty, and dwelling only upon the Pleasure to be found therein, say: *O my God when will the happy Day come, that my whole Delight shall be fixed on thee alone!* You may avoid all such Surprises of Pleasure after another manner: as when you perceive any agreeable Object allures you to take Pleasure in it, regard at the same time with the Eyes of your Soul, how cunningly the Devil lies lurking under this Bait; who seeks by it to

And all earthly beauty to that which is Heavenly.

Observe the craft of the Devil.



wound or destroy your Soul, and with Indignation tell him boldly: Ah thou cursed Serpent, how craftily dost thou lie in wait to infect me with thy Poison; and afterwards lifting your Mind to God, say: *O the Goodness of my God, be thou eternally blest and praised, that hast discovered this Enemy, that lay in wait to destroy my Soul.*

But when things unpleasant befall you think upon Gods Eternal Decree.

But in other Accidents, which are irksome and ungrateful to us, and of hard digestion to our Nature; as Cold or Heat, Hunger, Pains, Sickness, injurious Usage, or the like; elevate your Mind to his Eternal Will, who would have it so, and has decreed that you should suffer such an Affliction at this time, and with such Circumstances as attend it; upon this (full of hearty Joy :) say within your self: *Now is this thy divine Will, O my Eternal Lord and Love accomplished in me; whereby thou hast ordered it from all Eternity, that in this manner, and at this time, I should perceive and bear the Cross, and I believe verily all this to be for thine Honour and Glory, and the Benefit and Salvation of my Soul.*

So likewise in any sudden or disorderly accident.

7. And you may make use of such Thoughts as these upon all occasions of *Wind, Weather*, and the like, which are out of Mans Power and Foresight to hinder or prevent. So when you read any thing that pleases you, raise your Thoughts to God, whom you may imagin under the Words you read, and receive them as coming from his own Mouth. And in like manner when good

good Thoughts return to your Mind, with Complacency and Delight, by the Reflection you make upon some good and virtuous Action you have done; turn your Mind immediately to God, and adoring him with profound Humility and Reverence, acknowledge all that good you have done, proceeded meerly from his Grace, and therefore take heed you *do not rob him of his Glory, by attributing any thing to your self.*

And in all self Complacency.

## EXPLICATION.

*A larger Declaration of the foregoing Chapter, concerning the Government of our outward Senses.*

**T**HAT you may have a right Apprehension of this useful Science, and learn how to govern and *regulate your outward Senses*; it concerns you very much, to use all your utmost Care and Diligence, and a continual Exercise; because the Appetite which chiefly command our corrupt Nature, is violently and inconsiderately bent to search after worldly Comforts, Pleasures and Satisfaction: and being of it self unable to acquire them, makes use of the *Senses*, as its proper Instruments to lay hold of their Objects; from whence drawing their Images, and imprinting them in the Soul, it enjoys its desired Pleasure, which (by reason of its *Sympathy* with the Flesh)

The Appetite is violently bent to seek it's Pleasure, and makes the Senses to obtain it.

Flesh) dilates its self through all those Senses which are capable of such Pleasures; and from hence is derived the common Contagion which infects and corrupts both Body and Soul.

The Antidote against this Poison.

And how to curb the senses roaming abroad.

By separating the Spirit of each Object from the thing it self material.

Whether it be a Creature which has only a Being.

*Secondly*, being thus truly sensible of the danger of this Poison, apply an *Antidote* speedily, which may be this: *Beware of giving up the Reins to your Senses, and letting them run at random after the unruly Fancy of their leading Appetite.* Make use of them only in things that are good, profitable, or necessary, and if unawares they have gotten too much Liberty, and are roam'd abroad beyond their Bounds; either recal them back, or else so regulate them, that whereas at first they had yielded themselves Prisoners to vain and empty Pleasures, they may now bring home some useful, and noble Spoil, and from every Object the Soul may take occasion of raising her Affections towards Heaven, to the Contemplation of her Creator, wherein this Method may be taken: As soon as any Object is presented to the outward Senses, separate the Spirit in the Creature, from the Creature it self, and consider it as having nothing in its own Nature worthy to take up your Thoughts, only as it is the *Work of God*, who has bestowed its being upon it, gives it the Goodness, and indues it with the Beauty and all the Prerogatives and Perfections it has; and take occasion from thence to rejoyce and praise GOD as the Cause and Fountain of all visible and imaginable



imaginable Excellencies, all Creatures being but small Resemblances of what he eminently contains in his divine Essence; and taking Pleasure in him alone, say; *O divine and amiable Essence! How doth my Heart leap with Joy to think of thee, the Eternal Author of all created Beings!*

In like manner, when you take notice of *Trees, Plants, Herbs, Flowers, and such like;* Or hath Vegetation and increase. think how they have no Life of themselves, but from the invisible Spirit, that quickens them: To whom you may thus breath out your Soul: *O the true Life, from which, in which, and by which all Creatures live and increase! When shall I love him? When shall my whole Delight be in him?*

Upon the sight of any *Beast, Animal, or Insect,* Or hath sense and Motion. let your Mind soar up to God, the sole Author of all their Sense and Motion, saying: *O thou supream Mover, of all things, yet in thy self immoveable, how great is my Joy in thy firm Stability!*

So when your Senses are touch'd or pleased with the extraordinary Beauty of any thing; separate with all Speed that which appears to the Eye from the inward Spirit within the Center of it; and considering that all the fair outside proceeds only from the invisible Fountain, say with a chearful Heart: *O the Joy of my Soul, when it thinks on the eternal and immense Beauty, that is the original Source, and essential Cause of all created Beauty!* Or is indued with some rare Beauty.

And upon the Consideration of some Or Excellent Perfection, Perfection of any Creature, first making the

## How to govern the Senses.

the aforesaid Distinction, break forth into such like Expressions: *O rich Treasury of all Virtues, what Satisfaction do I feel that all good is derived from thee alone, and that all Goodness compared to thy divine Perfection is a mere nothing.*

Also

when you undertake any Action.

When you are putting your hand to any Action, think upon God as the first Cause thereof, and your self only as the Instrument; saying: *O Sovereign Lord of the Universe, how do I rejoyce, that I can do nothing without thee, and that thou art the prime, and principal Agent in all good Actions!*

Or refresh your Body with Meat and Drink.

Taking any Refreshment of Meat or Drink; reflect, who it is that gives the Relish and Savour to the Creature, and desiring to take no Content but in him only, say: *Rejoyce, O my Soul, that there is no true Satisfaction but in God, and that in him only thou hast a full Abundance of all Pleasure.*

If some sweet or fragrant Smell affect your Sense, stay not there; but ascend to him who is the Source of all Sweetness, And say: *Alas! O my Lord, as I am truly glad, that all Sweetness proceeds from thee, so grant, I beseech thee, that my Soul being truly dispoiled of all earthly Pleasures, may soar up continually to thy delicious Abode, and be a sweet smelling Sacrifice in thy divine Nostrils.*

Or are delighted with musical Harmony.

When you are taken with the Harmony of some Excellent Musick, let it put you in mind of that which is heavenly, and say: *O my Lord, and my God, what an unspeakable Harmony is there in thy infinite Perfections. O what admirable Musick is there among*

among the Chorus of Angels and Heavenly Citizens.

This may you learn to raise up your Spirit by the means of all sensible Objects to the contemplation of the Divinity. You may in like manner be instructed how to pass from the same sensible Objects to Meditations on our Saviours Life and Passion, by considering in them as before that supreme good, which is the efficient Cause of their Being, and all the Beauty they have, admiring his infinite Goodness and Greatness, who being the absolute Lord of all things, would vouchsafe to descend so low as to become Man, and die for sake, suffering his own Creatures to arm themselves against him their Creator.

Or any other sensible Object.  
How to raise your Soul by the same Objects to contemplate our Saviours life and Passion.

Many Things will also particularly represent to you these sacred Mysteries, and put you in mind of several Instruments and Circumstances of his cruel Sufferings.

1. Poor Cottages will bring to your Remembrance the Stable and Manger your Saviour was born in.

As, by the sight of poor cottages.

2. When it raineth you will reflect upon that divine Moisture distilling from his Body in his bloody Agony.

Of rain.

3. When you see any Ruins or Heaps of Stones, they will put you in mind of the Rock that rent asunder at his Death.

Of stones.

4. The Earth will seem to tell you how it then trembled.

Of the earth.

5. And in a dark and gloomy day you may think how the Light of the Sun was then obscured.

Of the Sun.



Of the  
water &c.

6. If you look upon the *Water*, you will easily fall into the Contemplation of that which issued out of his Side, and so of all other Objects.

In tasting  
wine.

7. As when you are drinking *Wine*, think then of the Gall and Vinegar that he tasted.

In sweet  
smells.

8. When you smell any thing *sweet*, think of the rotten and stinking Carcasses upon Mount *Carmel* where our Saviour suffered.

In cloth-  
ing your  
self.

9. Putting on your *Cloath*, reflect how Christ, the Eternal Word, put on our Humanity to make you Partaker of the divine Nature.

In un-  
clothing  
your self,

10. *Uncloathing* your self, think how naked he was nailed to the Cross; hearing a tumultuous

In hear-  
ing noises.

*Noise* of People, remember those abominable Outcries, away with him, away with him, crucifie him.

Hearing  
the clock  
strike.

11. When the *Clock strikes*, think how your Saviours Heart panted in the Garden, at the Apprehension of his approaching Passion, or seem to hear, and count the cruel Strokes of the Scourges, or Blows of the Hammer, that fastned the Nails thro' his sacred Body to the Cross.

In times of  
sadness.

12. If you are oppressed with *Sadness* and Sorrow, either by reason of Sickness or Sufferings, or out of Compassion to others; conceive, alas, how little is all this, compared to the Incomprehensible Grief, Distress, and Anguish, which pierced the Body and Soul of your dear Saviour.

Other  
ways to  
meditate  
upon sen-  
sible Ob-  
jects.

13. Having thus shewed you how to elevate your *Understanding*, by means of all sensible Things, to the Divinity, and to the

the Myſteries of the Word Incarnate ; I will alſo add other Means and Methods of Meditation, drawn from outward *Objects*, that as the Guſts of Souls are various ; ſo each one may find ſomething proper for his Reliſh ; and this Variety may not only be uſeful to Beginners, and thoſe of a mean Capacity ; but even to more elevated Souls, and thoſe that are well advanced in the way of the Spirit, who being not always equally diſpoſed to ſublime Contemplations, may find ſomething here to ſerve them in their lower Stations, or in the time of Darkneſs and Deſertions.

14. When therefore *Objects* very pleaſing to the Eye, delicious to the Senſe, and deſirable to Fleſh and Blood, ſhall be repreſented to you ; conſider how mean theſe things are in themſelves, let the World commend and eſteem them ever ſo much ; how the beſt of them is no better than Dirt, and Dung in reſpect of that glorious Happineſs, to which you are deſigned, and which you are purſuing and aſpiring after.

By conſidering how mean the beſt of them are in themſelves.

15. When your *Eyes* are dazled with the Brightneſs of the Sun-ſhine, know for certain that your Soul is more glorious and beautiful than the Sun, if you are in a State of Grace, otherwiſe that it is more dark and obſcure than Hell it ſelf.

As the Sun's brightneſs.

16. When you look up and admire the Beauty of the *Firmament* ; elevate your Soul to thoſe higher Manſions of the Bleſſed Spirits, and there fix and feaſt your Thoughts,

The Firmament.

in

in the Prospect of that Happiness that is prepared for you.

The Birds  
melody.

17. When you hear the warbling Notes of Birds, or any other Musical Harmony; let your Spirit soar up, and dwell upon those divine Allelujahs they are singing in Heaven; and beg of your dear Lord, that you may at last become worthy to join in Praises with those Celestial Choristers.

Walking  
abroad.

18. When you are walking along the way, think how every one of your paces is a step towards Death.

Obser-  
ving the  
flight of  
Birds.

19. When you see the Birds, how swiftly they fly through the Air, and how the Waters are hastning into the Ocean; think how your Life slips away, and your Soul with greater speed running on to Eternity.

In windy  
and stor-  
my wea-  
ther.

20. Let Storms and Tempests, Thunder and Lightning, put you in Remembrance of the fearful Day of Judgment; and beg Mercy and Grace of your Saviour; that you may now make such good use of the time he lends you, that you may be prepared to appear before his dreadful Majesty.

In time of  
Grief and  
Trouble.

When Grief or Melancholy oppresseth your Mind, or any Inconvenience troubles you, raise up and resign your self entirely to the Eternal Will of God, who is pleased this Affliction should befall you for your good and his Glory, and be glad of this occasion to serve him according to his own Will and Pleasure.

Or when  
you are in  
the  
Church.

Let the Churches you frequent put you in mind, that your Soul is God's Temple, and



and should be therefore kept pure and holy, fit for such a noble Guest.

Finally, let every Creature, all Objects and Accidents be so *spiritualized* and refined from their earthly Dross, that they may serve as true Instruments to the Perfection of your Soul, and become powerful helps to your Union with God, which is the only End you aim at.

Finally make all Objects and Accidents Instruments of your Perfection.

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*How to govern the Tongue.*

**A**ND because the *Tongue* hath a near Affinity with our Senses (for we willingly discourse of those things we take delight in.) I will here take occasion briefly to shew you how you are to regulate and govern this unruly Member.

Much talking proceeds ordinarily from a certain Presumption which perswades us, that we are very knowing in the things we talk of, and so pleasing our selves with our own Conceptions, we endeavour to imprint them in the Minds of others, with superfluous and frequent Repetitions of the same Subject, to appear thereby more Masters of Reason than others; and as if we had Authority to teach others, or they stood in need of our Instructions. It is not easy to express in few words the Evil that is the Consequence of this Vice, it being the Encourager of Idleness and Detraction, the Instrument of Falshood, leaves the Mind

Much talk proceeds from Presumption.

F

light,

light, and blasts and ruins the Spirit of Devotion.

Wherefore I advise you, in the first place, *not to enlarge your self in long Discourses*: If they are unwillingly heard, it is against the Laws of Civility; if they are willing to hear them, you'll be too apt to exceed the Bounds of Modesty.

Therefore avoid long Discourses.

And passionate Expressions.

Avoid also all pathetical and *passionate Expressions*, and an high tone of your Voice; for both these are generally odious to the Hearers, and commonly Arguments of Vanity and Presumption.

And all talking of your own Affairs.

Speak not *of your self*, of your own Affairs, Parentage, or Kindred, unless upon necessity; and then with all possible Shortness, Simplicity, and Sincerity, and Modesty; and if another seem forward in such Speeches of himself, let his Indiscretion teach you, but do not imitate him, tho' his Words seem'd to tend to Humiliation and Accusation of himself.

And of your Neighbours.

Let not your Neighbour nor his Concerns be the *Subject of your Discourse*, unless it be in order to relieve him, vindicate him, or speak well of him, or on some other charitable Account.

But speak willingly of God.

Shew a Willingness to *talk much of God*, and particularly of his Love and Goodness, yet always with profound Reverence for fear of Indiscretion. And therefore be more satisfied to hear others Discourse, than to talk your self; and let what good is said, be received and treasured up in your Heart.

As for all other Discourses, let the sound only touch your Ears, but keep your Mind fix'd upon God, and if you must needs be attentive to them, because your Answer is expected, let your Thoughts be still Heavenwards, and think well before you speak, and then you may easily resolve what will be proper to say, and whether it be not best to be silent.

And consider before, and when you speak.

*Lastly*, You will find by experience, that *Silence* is of excellent use in your spiritual Combat, giving you Strength to resist, Constancy to support, and Confidence to overcome : It is a sure Friend to him that distrusts himself, and puts his trust in God, it preserves us in a fit Temper for Devotion, and comforts us in the Exercises of our Duty. And indeed, if we do but consider the Mischiefs that follow after much talking, it will be sufficient to make us in Love with Silence ; to which that you may habituate your self, make frequent use of Solitude and Retirement from unnecessary Company and light Conversation ; by which means instead of Men, you shall have Angels, and God himself for your Companions. In short, if you reflect upon the Conflict you have undertaken, and how much you have to do, you will find little leisure to spend in idle Discourses.

The praise and profit of silence.



## C H A P. XIV.

*Of the Order to be observed in fighting against our Enemies.*

Observe those that are your greatest Enemies.

And single out the most dangerous to fight with. But when they dont appear seek them out.

**T**HE Method or Order you may observe in resisting your Passions, is, *first* to enter into your Heart, and seriously and diligently to examin which hath the greatest Power over you, and what other Thoughts and Affections it is accompanied with.

*Secondly*, when you have found your Enemy, turn your Weapons against that which actually assaults you and oppresses you the most, and is in danger to ruin you.

*Thirdly*, And especially in time of Peace with your Passions, when no Enemy seems to appear in the Field, do you begin with them and make your most vigorous Onset upon those which are most *prejudicial* to your Soul, and most displeasing in the sight of God.

## C H A P. XV.

*What Course is to be taken when we are conquered and wounded by our Enemies.*

When you are fallen rise with all speed.

**I**F you are *fallen* into some Fault either through Frailty and Weakness, or sometimes deliberately, and with the Consent of your Will, get up again with all speed; and first in a deep *Acknowledgment* of your own Baseness,

Baseness, and a hearty Hatred of your self humble your self before God: then recollecting your spirits, confess your Ingratitude to him, and say: O Lord, behold my Guilt and Misery, I have done this Action like my self, and what can be expected from me but Baseness and Sinfulness, I am sorry for it, O my God, with all my Heart, and I confess I should have done a great deal worse, and fallen into much greater Sins, if thy merciful Hand did not continually uphold and raise me again; for which I render thee my most humble Thanks. And now, O Lord, deal not with me according to my Sins and Offences, but do thou like thy self, according to the Riches of thy Mercies in Jesus Christ, and let me no longer live out of thy Favour, nor ever offend thee any more.

And confess your Faults.

Having thus sincerely poured forth your Heart in the presence of God, do not distract your Mind with reasoning and thinking whether he hath forgiven you the Sin, or no; for such a Curiosity favours much of Pride, and is but disquiet and loss of time to no purpose, and a certain Snare of Satan. Therefore after you have humbled your Soul as before, cast your self wholly upon the Mercy of God, reassume your accustomed Exercises, and take Courage again, as tho' you had not fallen; and if you should chance to fall oftentimes in a Day through Frailty or Surprise, and receive many grievous Foils from your Enemies, yet never despair nor grow faint-hearted or timorous, but still get up again, and humble your self, and stand the stronger upon your Guard for the future,

Be not over solicitous, or fearful.

future, with as firm Confidence in the Goodness of God after the second, third, and last of your Falls, as you did at the first.

But be diligent, and use violence with your self.

Recovering the quiet of your Soul, and reconciliation with God.

The way to get this quiet is for the present to forget your Fault.

The Devil has so much Envy to see how acceptable to God, and beneficial to the Soul this Exercise is, that he lays all his Stratagems to make us fearful and negligent, and to keep us from practising it. Use Violence therefore to your self in this Case, and the more difficulty you find in it, so much the more redouble your Diligence in doing it, and never think it too tedious to renew it several times in a Day as often as ever you fall. And if after such frequent Relapses you feel an extraordinary Trouble, Confusion and Diffidence in your self, yet still endeavour by all means to *recover the inward Peace* and Repose of your Soul, and then reconcile your self to God by Humiliation, as aforesaid. For Disquietness of Mind remaining after the Sin committed, is not any Sign of your Sorrow, for having offended God, but rather of Fear from some private Inconvenience you think you have thereby incurred.

Now the way to recover the Quiet of your Mind, may be this: Having truly turned your Soul to God, and humbly begged Pardon for your Offence, think no more of it; but endeavour for a time to forget it, and fix your Thoughts then more upon the infinite Love of God, and how earnestly he desires to unite himself to you, and make you Partaker of his Eternal Happiness: And when by this, or the like Considerations



tions you have settled your Mind, and quieted your Heart, turn your Thoughts again to consider your Fall, and do as you are directed in the Beginning of this Chapter.

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C H A P. XVI.

*That we should always endeavour to keep our Minds in a quiet Frame.*

*Explication.*

**A**S when we have lost the Quiet of our Heart, we are to use all possible Endeavours to recover it, as aforesaid; so you are to know that no Accident whatsoever can with any just Reason deprive us of the same: for 'tis very true, that we must be angry with our selves for our Sins, yet our Grief must be governed with Discretion, and accompanied with Tranquillity; and our Sorrow must produce Acts and Resolutions of Amendment of our Lives, not of Disquiet and Anxiety in our selves.

No outward accident can justly deprive us of our peace.

As for other troublesome and unpleasant Accidents, as the Sickness, Death and Afflictions of our dear Friends, or publick Calamities, as the Plague, War, Famine, Fire, and other Evils falling upon our selves or others, though as they are things contrary to our Nature, they must needs lie heavy upon us sometimes; yet we may by the Power of God's Grace, not only be resigned to them, but look upon them with Satisfaction, yet we

For though we must needs abhor things contrary to our Nature

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may love them as coming from Gods permission. And so conform our selves to his holy Will.

tion, as the just Punishments of the wicked or Exercises of Virtue to the good ; for which Ends our wise and merciful God permits them to befall us.

Thus conforming our selves to God's holy Will, we may quietly and peaceably pass through the midst of all the Bitterness and Contrarieties of this Life. And take this for a certain Truth, that all Disquietness of Mind is displeasing to God, as being never without some Imperfection, and commonly proceeding from some Pride and Self-love.

You are to appoint a Centinel.

To defend your Heart on all sides against Unquietness and Trouble, you must appoint over yourself a faithful *Centinel*, which as soon as it discovers any thing tending to disturb or disquiet you, may presently give the Signal that you may have time to take your Arms in Hand for your Defence.

If you are surpris'd with perplexity. return with all diligence to quiet your Heart.

And if it happens (as too often it doth) that through some sudden Assault you find your self strangely perplex'd, presently setting all other things aside, pacifie your Interior, and endeavour to regain a quiet and joyful Heart ; for without this be done, you will not be enabled to prosecute your other Affairs without exposing your self to great Danger from the Enemy, who will from thence take occasion to attempt you more violently ; for he fears this sacred Quiet and Peace of the Soul (as the Tabernacle wherein God resides to manifest his Wonders) and therefore often pretending Friendship, he endeavours to surprise us by Suggestions

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Suggestions that have some Appearance of Good, the Design whereof is in effect, to bereave us of our Peace and Tranquility.

And therefore admit no new Affections Before offering them to God.

As soon therefore as you have any Notice of some new Desire or Affection, that demands Admittance into your Heart, let it not presently enter in; but endeavouring to divest your self of all Self-love, offer it to God with an humble Acknowledgment of your Ignorance and Blindness, and beseech him earnestly, to give you the Light of his Grace, to judge of this Motion, whether it comes from him or some Earthly Cause and selfish Consideration; and pray him also, to give you those Graces as are necessary to the mortifying the Vivacity of your Spirit, before you put any good Desire in Execution though sent from God himself: For such Works as are accompanied, or done *with such Mortification*, are more grateful unto him than those which are done following the Desires, and Hastiness of our Nature. And this Mortification of our Will doth generally better please him than the Work it self.

And praying him to mortifie your will and desire.

If thus you reject the Desires that are not good, and do not rashly admit of those that are good before separating and representing the mixt Desires, and Passions of your corrupt Nature, the Fortress of your Soul will be always in Peace and Security, from all Disturbances without, and Apprehensions, and self Afflictions within; which  
Troubles,

Which is the surest way to remain in Peace,



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Troubles, though they seem very good, and to come from God; because they accuse you of some Fault, yet they are oftentimes suggested by the Devil. The only way to know whence they proceed, is to *examine their Effects*; for if they make you humble and Quiet, and more diligent to do your Duty, without lessening your Confidence in God, then receive them as coming from him; but if they make you unquiet, pusillanimous, listless, unapt to good Works, and diffident of God, and above all, if they make you careless to correct the Faults they blame you for; be assured that they do not come from God; but are suggested by the Devil, and therefore mind them not; but persist constantly in your accustomed devout Exercises, as if you did not at all feel any such Suggestions.

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C H A P. XVII.

*How the Devil by the means of general good Purposes endeavour to hinder Progress in Virtue.*

The Devil suggests desires of fighting against former faults that you may neglect the present.

THE Devil also makes use of another Craft to deceive us; (to wit) the *general Purposes* and desires, that we form in our Imaginations, against remote Enemies; and his Address on this occasion, is the more to be feared, in that while our Minds are taken up with this Imployment, he hinders us from making War with our nearest and most

most dangerous Enemies ; which are those we have the most need to fall to work with, if we mean to overcome our selves. The Neglect of this makes us fall into many Disorders, as they must needs do ; for we are continually wounded, and yet seek no Remedy for our Wounds. And while we thus take these Proposes for real Performances, we fall into self-complacency and secret Pride: For when we come upon Tryal, we cannot so much as digest a hard Word, or the least Contradiction ; yet when we are wrapt up in our high Contemplations, we can then make strange Resolutions of enduring patiently for God's sake, all the Torments of Martyrdom ; and as our Inferior Nature or Sensuality feels no Repugnancy to these Things ; because nothing actually troubles or grieves it ; we very foolishly and vainly imagin, that we are come to as high Degree of Perfection as those that have really undergone such violent Torments.

Wherefore if you would avoid this dangerous Snare, resolve not only in your Mind ; but set your self resolutely to fight with those Enemies that you find nearest, and most troublesome to you, and do most vigorously oppose you. And by this means you will plainly perceive the Truth or Falshood of your Resolutions, and their Strength or Weakness: But as for those that do not actually molest you, I would not advise you to combat with them, unless you apparently foresee that they are ready to assault you ; For then you may lawfully,  
and

Therefore  
you are to  
fight  
actually  
with your  
nearest  
Enemies.

*Of general Purposes in Virtue.*

and profitably make good Resolutions before hand ; that you may have more strength and courage at the time of Battle.

And dont  
perswade  
your self  
that you  
are a Con-  
queror un-  
less you  
are well  
versed in  
the acts of  
that Vir-  
tue.

Yet don't perswade your self, that by this Preparation you have already conquered them, unless you had been a long time exercised in Acts of Virtue, in which Case, though you are not able to overcome some little Defects, that God leaves in us many times, to preserve us in the humble Acknowledgment of our own Weakness; yet you may form Resolutions of aspiring to a higher Degree of Perfection.

Be not  
careless of  
small de-  
fects.

But whosoever is careless in striving against small Defects, and yet thinks he can easily overcome the greatest, is very vain and presumptuous, and already fallen into the Snare of the Devil.

Three  
things  
make our  
designs  
fruitless.

I advise you here, to take notice of three principal Occasions, wherein our Designs become generally fruitless; and our pious Purposes fail of their desired Effect, and this will teach you how to make good Purposes as you ought:

Relying  
on our  
own  
strength.

The first Occasion (which has been also touched briefly before) is, that we ordinarily purpose to do a good Action, or to avoid the doing of Evil, trusting more in our Strength, than in the Assistance of God: and this Pride (whence this Deceit arises) so hoodwinks our Eyes, that we seldom, or not at all see it; and are therefore justly permitted to fall into some Miscarriages, and fail of our Expectation, that we may there-  
by



by come to the true Knowledge of our own Nothingness, and learn to ground all our good Designs upon the Goodness, Grace, and Power of God ; and not at all upon our own Strength and Endeavours.

*Another* occasion is, that when our Will enters upon a Design, it wants Force, and Efficacy to go through with it ; it seems otherwise to us, because we are so fixed upon the Beauty of that Virtue we aim at, without thinking upon the Difficulty that is in the getting it ; that it is no Wonder such ill grounded Designs fall away, and come to nothing upon the first Approach of an Enemy.

The want of Force to go through with them.

The *Third* Occasion is, that we do not direct our Designs to their true and proper End, to wit, the pure Service and Honour of God. For we make them many times in Sicknes or Affliction, or in time of Distress, and Bitterness of Soul, rather to find thereby some Comfort in such Conditions, than only to please God ; who therefore lets us fall afterwards, that we may discern this Deceit, and learn to our Cost to aim in all our Actions, at his Holy Will and Pleasure.

The not aiming them at the right end.

## C H A P. XVIII.

*How the Devil strives to withdraw us from  
the Way of Virtue.*

Another  
deceit of  
the De-  
vil, ex-  
emplified  
in a sick  
Person.

Falling  
into Im-  
patience  
upon Pi-  
ous pre-  
tences.

And over  
earnestly  
desirous  
of Health.

**T**HE Devil also makes Use of another Stratagem to draw us from the way of Virtue. As thus, suppose a Person falls into Sickneſs, and deſires to ſupport it with Patience, the Devil (ſeeing that if he thus perſevere, he will probably get the Habit of that Virtue, puts into his Mind ſeveral Thoughts and Deſires, to do this or that good Work, if he could once have his Health again, and that he could then ſerve God better, and be more uſeful to himſelf, his Family and others; and theſe Deſires and Conceits by little, and little Increaſe to ſuch a Height, that they make him at laſt weary and impatient of his Sufferings; as being thereby hindred from doing ſuch Actions: And in proportion as his Deſires increaſe, his Inquietude increaſes with them, and by degrees inſenſibly, his Sickneſs which was intended as an Exerciſe of his Virtue, becomes altogether inſupportable, not as a thing which is in it ſelf diſpleaſing to him; but as it is a Hindrance to thoſe good Works, which he impatiently deſires to do.

Nor doth the Enemy reſt here; but having brought the ſick Perſon to this Diſpoſition, proceeds on farther to make him loſe and

and forget the Designs of such good Works, as he would be about, if he had his Health, leaving in him only a passionate Desire of recovering his Health ; and if this does not succeed accordingly, he falls into great Sadness and Impatience.

The best Remedy for this, is when you fall under Sicknes, or any other Affliction, take care to admit no Desire into your Mind, of any good you cannot then immediately put in Execution ; otherwise you will be in great Danger of falling into this Unquietness and Restlessness.

The remedy is to admit of no purposes which you cannot presently practise.

And you are in this Case to perswade your self with all Patience, Humility and Resignation ; that perhaps your Intentions now would not have the Effect you imagin ; because you are much weaker than you think ; or that God by his secret Judgments, unknown to you by reason of your Ingratitude, will not receive this good from you ; but rather would have you *humble your self under this present Affliction* : And so if you should be hindered by this, or any other means, from following your own fancy, in your usual Devotions, and particularly from receiving the Holy Communion ; trouble not your self with over earnest Desires, but endeavour wholly to resign your self to the Will of God, saying, If there were not in me some great Ingratitude, and many defects ; which God alone who searches the Heart, can see, I should not be now deprived of so great a Blessing, as the receiving of the Blessed Sacrament. I desire therefore to

Because perhaps they would not have there effect.

Or that God would not receive them.

Therefore trouble not your self when you cannot perform your desires.

acknow-



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acknowledge my own Unworthiness; his holy Name be ever Blessed and Praised. O my God, I place my whole Confidence in thy divine Goodness, and hoping thou wilt accept of my Will, which I earnestly desire to conform to thy Disposition, I here open to thee my Heart, ready to obey thy Holy Command, disposed to do what ever thou pleasest; enter into it, I beseech thee, and give me Courage and Strength against my Enemies, and then do with me, O my dear Lord, as is most agreeable to thy divine Majesty, and let thy sacred Will be now and always my only Food and Nourishment, since I desire nothing more, but to be purged and freed from all things that may displease thee; that I may be ready and prepared for thy Coming, and willing to follow thy blessed Will in all things whatsoever.

But rest  
secure  
that your  
good will  
is accept-  
able to  
God.

If you faithfully observe this Rule, rest secure that all your good Desires, tho' they do not take effect, either by reason of your Weakness, or the Opposition of your Enemy, or God himself not permitting it to try your Resignation, will always give you occasion of satisfying your Duty to God in that manner which best pleaseth him; and this is the truest Service and most acceptable Sacrifice you can offer, to his divine Majesty.

Another  
dange-  
rous  
Snare.

But I think it very convenient to give you here a Caution of another very dangerous and subtle Snare, into which many through Self-love fall unawares: And this is by palliating and excusing their Impatience with Zeal for some good: as a sick Person

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Person that is impatient at his Disease, <sup>Several</sup> says, his Impatience doth not proceed from <sup>pretences</sup> the Pain, or Trouble, his Sicknes causes him, <sup>for our</sup> but from his Displeasure at his bringing <sup>Impati-</sup> himself into it, or because in this Condition <sup>ence.</sup> he is a great Trouble to others, or because it hinders him from some necessary Business, or from charitable and spiritual Exercises.

Thus he that is disappointed in his seek- <sup>But all</sup> ing Preferment and Offices, will tell you, <sup>unwar-</sup> when he complains, 'tis not for his own <sup>rantable.</sup> sake, or particular Interest he is so much concerned, but for the Necessity of his Family and Friends, whom he might then have been in a Condition to have helped. But that such Men deceive themselves, is apparent by this, that they are not much disturbed, when the very same Things come to pass by some other Means or Persons, and when it has no regard to them in particular.

For Example: You say that your Sick- <sup>As in ex-</sup> ness does not afflict you as to your own <sup>plained</sup> particular, but only that you are a Burthen <sup>by an Ex-</sup> to those that are about you: Whence comes <sup>ample</sup> it then, that when they have the same Trouble in attending another sick Person, it scarce troubles you at all? From whence 'tis evident, that the true Root and Source of your Impatience, is in your self alone, and not from the Love you had for your Neighbour; and one may say and find the same in many other Instances of this and the like Nature.

G

To

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The Remedy is to separate the Pain from the pretended Circumstances.

To remedy this, I advise you as soon as you are apprehensive of any such Deceit, presently to separate the Pain which presseth upon you, from those Circumstances, which are pretended Excuses for your Impatience, and then reflecting upon the Pain alone, force your self to produce several Acts of Resignation, to suffer it patiently and willingly. Thus you will be able, either to make a good Progress in Virtue, or at least to discover your own Defects, whereof you were formerly ignorant.

Therefore desire not to be freed from your Cross.

I advise you also, if you are able to carry your Cross with Patience, never be anxious in desiring to be freed from it, for this Desire brings with it two great Evils: The one is, that if it do not make you fall into Impatience, yet it disposeth you by little and little to it: The other is, that it diminishes your Reward in the Sight of God, who esteems an Act of perfect Patience, (tho' short in respect to the time:) which is done with the total Resignation of our Wills to his divine Pleasure, more than a Service of a long Continuance.

But conform your Will to God.

In this therefore, and in all your other Proceedings, let this be a general Rule: withdraw and purifie your Mind from all other Desires and Requests, than those only which are agreeable to the Will of God. For since there can nothing happen to you, except what comes by your own Fault, but will be agreeable to him, you will never be much afflicted or troubled, and you will be



be always in the way of Perfection, if you desire nothing but what is his Will. Take heed also that the lawful means, which are sometimes necessary to be used for the removing any pressing Afflictions, be not mingled with some private Interest of your own, that is, that your principal Aim in making use of them, be not so much to deliver your self from that Affliction, but simply because God would have you make use of them; and then you will not be so apt to be discontented, if they should not have their Effect.

Especially upon using the lawful Means.

When the Devil perceives that we walk on warily in the true way of Virtue, so that his common Designs are not likely to take effect, he then transforms himself into an Angel of Light, and solicits us with delightful Thoughts, flatters us with fine Passages of Scripture, and Examples of Saints, that imagining we are already climb'd up to the top of Perfection, we may fall more dangerously from the Precipice which he would lead us to. To this end he presses us to extraordinary Fastings, Abstinence, Watchings and Zeal for little matters, to puff us up with Pride, as thinking we do very much in using them, or to destroy our Health, that we may become incapable of going on in our Duty, and grow weary of our spiritual Exercises, and become afterwards a Prey to our Enemies, and greater Slaves than ever to our worldly and carnal Pleasures, which hath happened to very many, whose Confidence and Presumption having set them on, and brought them to the

How to oppose the Devil striving to deceive us with Indiscretion.

Pressing us to extraordinary Rigours.

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Conduct and Violence of an *indiscreet* Zeal, after that they have gone beyond the Strength of their Body, or Vigour of their Minds by immoderate Severities, perished at last in their own Inventions, and so became Laughing stocks to their Enemies, and brought a Scandal upon Religion.

Which  
tho' they  
may be  
some-  
times  
good, yet  
must be  
temperate  
with Dis-  
cretion.  
Thus such  
as cannot  
imitate  
the Saints  
in austeri-  
ty of  
Life.

Now tho' these voluntary Severities may sometimes be requisit to those, who have strong Constitutions, provided they be accompanied with Humility of Spirit, yet they must be always tempered and moderated by Discretion according to each ones Nature and Quality. Thus he that is not able to imitate the Austerities of some ancient Saints, may be very capable of imitating their Virtues, by Fervency in Devotion, Frequency in Prayer, continually aspiring after the Love of God, striving to get above the World and the Body, and loving Silence and Solitude, as much as his Condition and Circumstances will permit. He may be humble and affable to all, patient in suffering Affronts and Contradictions, glad of the Occasions to do good, even to his very Enemies, and finally resolve to perform the Will of God, and promote his Honour to the utmost of his Power, and never to offend him in the least, for any temporal Pleasure or Profit.

All which inward Acts and Mortifications are far more pleasing to God, than the greatest Macerations of the Flesh; and therefore my Advice is, that you be very  
punctual

May imi-  
tate their  
Virtues.

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punctual in those things, which your Station obliges you to ; but as for *extraordinary* matters, be rather backward and fearful, than indiscreetly forward to set about them.

I speak not here to those delicate Christians, who are so much inclined to indulge themselves, and so over careful of their Concerns in the World, and the Preservation of their Health, under pretence of doing their duty, and being thereby better able to serve God: For they strive to joyn two Capital Enemies together, the Flesh and the Spirit; but with manifest danger of their Souls, and great Hindrance of their spiritual Growth. *Discretion* therefore must be the chief Director in this matter, which must distinguish the Diversity of Complexions and Conditions; since every one is not of the same Temper, and all cannot be regulated by the same Precept. This Discretion and Moderation is very necessary not only in outward Affairs; but also in our Pursuit of inward Virtues, as shall be further explained.

Yet take heed of giving way to delicacies. &c. Under pretence of Health, and the better doing your Duty. Discretion therefore is the best director in this matter of Mortification.

Tho' a true Soldier of Christ that aspires after Perfection, must put no Limits to his spiritual Profit, yet there are *some Heats of Spirit*, which are very good to be cooled a little with the Dew of Discretion, especially that Eagerness and Fervour that is in Beginners. You are therefore to know, that Virtues are to be gotten by little and little, and by *Degrees*; that they may take the deeper Root in our Souls, and become more

And also his in the acquiring of Virtues.



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Which  
must be  
done by  
degrees.  
And one  
by one ra-  
ther than  
many, or  
all toge-  
ther.

For the  
obtaining  
of any one  
is a pre-  
paration  
to all the  
rest.

Further  
advices  
for the  
getting  
of virtue.

durable. For example: If you are endeavouring after *Patience*; you are first to study how to bear Injuries and Afflictions, before you think to come to those higher Degrees of delighting in them, and desiring them.

To this end I advise you, not to apply your self to obtain all Virtues or many together; but first and principally to practice one and then another. For by this means a virtuous Habit is more easily planted, and firmly fixed in your Soul: For by the continual Exercise of one Virtue at a time, the *Memory* is ready upon all occasions, the *Understanding* is studying new means and reasons to acquire it, and the *Will* is more affectionately inclined to embrace it; than if they were imployed about many, and one Virtue hath so great a Conformity with another, that the implanting of any one, is the preparing the Ground for all the others; and whosoever is a Proficient in the Practice of one Virtue, is thereby in a very good way of purchasing another: Insomuch that as one increases all the rest by the same Means increases in our Souls; by reason of their inseparable Nearness, Connexion and Concatenation together, they being all Beams proceeding from the same Sun, which is the divine Light.

Besides those means formerly prescribed (in the 11th Chapter) for obtaining of Virtues, I will here give you some brief and material Advice concerning a matter of so great importance.

*First*

First it is very necessary for you to have a generous Heart, great Courage, and a strong and resolute Will, being certain to meet with very subtle Enemies, to wrestle with many Difficulties, and suffer many Crosses and Contradictions.

1. You must have a great resolution to go through difficulties.

(2) In the next place you are to bring with you a particular *Inclination* and *Affection* to Virtue; which you cannot be without, if you truly consider how pleasing it is to God, how excellent in it self, how profitable and how absolutely necessary to the attaining of Perfection.

2. You are to have a great love to virtue.

(3) Every Morning make strong and efficacious *Resolutions* and *Protestations* to exercise your self according to the occasions which may probably that day be offered you, and sometimes in the day *reflect* upon your self, and *examine* the Performance of your Promise, and fervently *renew* your Desires and Intentions.

3. You must practice it upon all occasions.

(4) *Apply* all your Actions, spiritual Exercises, reading, Prayer and Meditations for the obtaining that Virtue you are in Practice of.

4. Apply all your Exercises to that end.

(5) Endeavour so frequently to form *Acts of Virtue* both internal and external, that by use they may become as easie and natural to you, as were formerly their contraries, which were conformable to your vicious Inclinations.

5. From Acts thereof.

(6) The sweet Passages and Sentences of the holy Scripture are of great force to this purpose; and therefore it will be very convenient to get several of them by heart, relating

6. Meditate often upon such Scriptures as relating concern

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and com- relating to the Virtue you aim at, and to  
mend it. repeat them often to your self, especially  
upon those occasions, when you feel the  
Passions and Motions arising in you con-  
trary to that Virtue. For Example, if Pa-  
tience be your Virtue; reflect upon that of  
the Psalmist: *The patient abiding of the meek  
shall not perish for ever*, Psal. 9. 18. or that  
Saying of Solomon: *He that is slow to Anger  
is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his  
Spirit than he that takes a City*, Prov. 16. 32.  
And that of our Saviour, *Luke 21. 19. In  
your Patience possess ye your Souls*, And in the  
Epistle to the Hebrews 12. 1. *Let us run with  
Patience the Race that is set before us.*

7. Make  
frequent  
use of Eja-  
culatory  
Prayer.

(7.) To the same purpose you may also  
make use of these Ejaculatory Prayers:  
*When, O my God, shall I be armed and streng-  
thened with Patience to support cheerfully the  
crosses I meet with? How dear should those  
Sufferings be to me which make me so like  
my meek Saviour, who has suffered so much  
for my sake; O Lord thou Love of my Soul,  
how happy should I be, if in the midst of  
Crosses and Tribulations I could yet couragious-  
ly give up my self to suffer more for thy  
Glory? These and such like Ejaculations and  
affectionate Prayers have great Power and  
Force to excite us to Virtue and ascend  
even to God in Heaven, especially being  
assisted and accompanied with two wings, a  
true Knowledge of the Content our Lord  
takes in our Practice of Virtue, and an ear-  
nest and longing desire to obtain it, be-  
cause it is so pleasing to his divine Majesty.*  
Which  
being ad-  
ded, with  
two  
wings  
will soar  
up to  
Heaven.

And



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And you must always be sure of *pressing* Above all things you are to make a continual progress.  
*forward* in the Practice of Virtue, for if you grow negligent in the Pursuit of it, it will necessarily follow, that thro' the violent Inclination of your sensual Appetite, and the alluring Impulse of outward Objects, unruly Passions will be always striving to regain their Dominion, and will either quite destroy or at least much diminish the Habit of Virtue you have gotten; and will besides deprive you of those manifold Graces and Gifts of God, which by your Continuance and Progress you might have infallibly obtained.

For the way of the Spirit tending to Perfection is very different from that of Earthly Travellers, who lose nothing in staying and diverting themselves by the way to redress their Weariness, which is caused and increased by the Continuance of their corporal Motion; whereas in this way of the Spirit the more you go on, going the more your Strength encreases: For by your strength increased.  
For the *Inferior* Part (which by it's Resistance makes the way rough and painful:) is by this virtuous Progress still more weakened; and the *Superior* Part (which is the Habitation where Virtue resides) is thereby fortified. So that by a Continuance in well doing, you still lessen the Contradiction, which you at first feel in your Journey and receive a certain secret Satisfaction in this happy Conquest of your self.

Thus

Till you  
are got up  
to the  
Moun-  
tain of  
Perfeci-  
on.

Thus continuing in your Design and marching always forwards in your Journey, you will with less pain and difficulty ascend the remaining Steps and Degrees of Virtue, till at last you come to the top of the Mountain, where you will then perform your pious Exercises not only without Contradiction, but with much Joy and Content. And having tamed and triumphed over your irregular Passions and compleated the Victory over your self and all Creatures, you will find your self sweetly settled in the Bosom of the Divinity.

You are  
also to  
seek out  
occasions  
of practi-  
sing Vir-  
tue.

Especially  
such as  
are con-  
trary to  
your sen-  
sualities.  
This be-  
ing the  
proporti-  
onate  
means to  
attain it.

12. And to the attaining of this Habit of Virtue, think it not enough, to take the occasions that are offered you to exercise your Virtue, (as has been shewed in the *ninth* foregoing Chapter) but seek them out, and joyfully lay hold of them, tho' they seem never so little, and at a distance, especially such as are contrary to your Sensuality. To this difficult task you may encourage your self by these following Considerations, whereof one is, that all such occasions are the proportionate and probable (yea necessary) means for the acquiring of Virtue, insomuch that when you demand of God the Increase of Virtue, you also virtually desire these occasions; else your Prayers would be presented in vain, and your Heart would contradict your Lips: Nay, you might seem to tempt God by them, who ordinarily does not give patience with-  
out

out suffering, nor Humility without Contempt or some outward Humiliations. And this also is true in all other Virtues, which are acquired by contrary Accidents, whereby we best perceive our own Wants, and therefore are more pressed to seek a Remedy for them. And the more sensible we are on such Encounters, the more strong and vigorous are the Acts by which we endeavour at the Virtues we stand in need of. You are therefore very much to esteem, and improve your self by, the least offered occasion, such as a cross Look or a contradicting Word, which will enure you by degrees to bear with patience much greater difficulties.

The other Consideration is (what has been formerly hinted) to take all things that befall you as *coming from Gods Providence* for your particular Profit; and tho' some of them (as your own or other Peoples Faults) can't be imputed to God, (who abhors all Sin) yet they may be referred to him, in as much as he permits them, and tho' he can, yet does not hinder them. But all Afflictions and Punishments whatever that happen to us through our own Defects or the Wickedness of others, are from God and his divine Providence, to which he concurs, and wills that we endure them, and which he would not permit (since they contain a certain Deformity so odious to his Purity) but for the good we may draw from them and for other just Reasons best known to his all knowing Majesty.

And to take all things that befall you, as coming from Gods Providence, for your particular benefit

And that you may draw good from them.

Being



The mistake of  
some re-  
ctified.

Being therefore ascertained of the Will of God in all your Sufferings, and that he would have you willingly to support the Afflictions that befall you either by others Faults, or your own, it follows that they are much mistaken, who (to excuse their Impatience) pretend that God will nor this or that, because he hates all Evil: For what is this but to seek a Cloak to cover their own Imperfections, and to refuse the Carriage of that Cross which Christ has laid upon them?

To suffer  
volunta-  
rily from  
them  
whom  
you have  
obliged.

And I yet farther assure you that the voluntary Digestion of such difficulties as come from those Persons you have obliged, is more valuable in the Sight of God, than of those which come from other Accidents: Because the Pride of our perverse Nature is more suppressed by those, than by any other, and suffering these with Patience, tends very much to the Glory of God, by co-operating with him in that wherein his ineffable Power and Goodness so greatly appear. And this is in effect to draw from the poisonous Nature of Sin a precious Balsam of Virtue.

Is to draw  
Virtue  
from Sin  
and Ma-  
lice.

And believe it (my dearly Beloved) God no sooner discovers in your Heart a lively and ardent Desire of well-doing, and a hearty and sincere desire of getting this glorious Conquest, but he immediately prepares and presents you with violent Temptations and harsh occasions, which you are to take and digest as he best knows and pleases: and therefore confident of his Love,  
and

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and careful of your own Profit, receive them blindfold from his Fatherly Hands, swallowing them down chearfully, readily, and securely, even to the very last drop, as a Medicine made by a Physitian that is incapable of Error, and whose Ingredients, the bitterer they are, and the less Relish and Sweetness they give to your Nature, the more profitable they are to your Soul.

Receive therefore the bitter Cup mixt by your heavenly Physician, and swallow it chearfully.

You have been already informed that the single Practice of one Virtue at once is more profitable than the laying out for them altogether; and that all Occasions and Occurrences, tho' different in themselves, are to be directed to that end, now take this Method for your easier and better proceeding therein:

How to make use of all occasions in the exercise of Virtue.

It may fall out that oftentimes in the same Day or Hour, you may chance to be unjustly blamed or found fault with, for something which in it self rather deserves Praise and Commendation; that you may cause Anger by doing a good Action, or be murmured against for some small Insignificant Matter; that your reasonable Demand may be harshly refused and rejected; that that you are suspected, contradicted and reproached without Cause; that your Body is afflicted with Pain, or your Mind with Trouble and Melancholy; that you are employ'd in some peevish and ungrateful Affair; that your Diet is ill dressed and in short, that you meet with many Crosses of this or the like Nature, on such

In all occurring Accidents of suffering.

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such inconsiderable Occasions, or perhaps in Matters of more difficulty to be supported, which we must never expect to be free from, while we are in this miserable Life.

Make  
Acts of  
the Vir-  
tue you  
Practice.

As of Pa-  
tience.

Of Hu-  
mility.

Of obedi-  
ence.

Of Po-  
verty of  
Spirit.

Of Cha-  
rity.

In all which Accidents tho' it be good to produce divers Acts of Virtue, conformable to the Variety of the Subjects; yet following the Rule already prescribed, you are to exercise your self in such Acts as directly aim at that Virtue you are then in Practice of. As for Example, if at the time when these Occasions are offered, you are endeavouring after *Patience*, your Way is then to form in your Mind Acts and Resolutions of enduring those particular Contrarieties with all Willingness, Joyfulness and Chearfulness. If your Virtue be *Humility*, that you are bent upon purchasing, acknowledge your self most justly deserving these and much greater Crosses and harder Usage. If *Obedience* and Subjection of your Will, be the Virtue you are labouring for, yield readily and submit your self to the Providence of God on this occasion, offering not only to obey all reasonable Creatures, (if it be his Pleasure) but courageously to bend and force your Will to all things that may any way disgust and displease you. If it be *Poverty of Spirit*, content your self in the want of all worldly Comforts and Conveniences whatsoever: If it be *Charity*, produce Acts of Love both towards your Neighbour, as being instrumental to your purchasing of Virtue,



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Virtue, and towards God as being the principal Cause, whence Crosses proceed (or at least are permitted to come upon you) for your spiritual Practice and Profit. And by this Doctrine here delivered, concerning the several Accidents that may daily befall you, you may easily learn how to behave your self and make Acts of the Virtue you are endeavouring after, on any occasion of Sickness, Persecution or other Pressures, which are of longer continuance.

As for the Space of Time, which is to be employed in the Practice of each Virtue, it is not for me to determine, but it must be regulated by the Condition, Diligence and Necessity of each particular Person, and according to their greater or less Progress in the way of the Spirit, whereof none can be so competent a Judge, as he who is a discreet Guide, and knows the true State of their Souls.

Concerning the time you are to stay in the Practice of each Virtue, it's hard to determine.

But whoever will heartily settle himself to work with the Devotion and Diligence aforesaid, may without doubt make a great Progress in a few weeks Practice; and take this for one certain Sign of your Proficiency: *If in the midst of Dryness, Darkness and Distresses of your Soul, when you feel your self bereaved of all spiritual Joy and Comfort, you have still Courage to go on in your virtuous Undertakings.*

Yet you may have some signs of your Progress. One is, if you are not out of Heart in Times of Dulness. the &c.

Moreover the Contradiction of your Sensuality in the forming Acts of Virtue, will give you a sufficient Testimony; for

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Another, the more that is weakned, the stronger and if the Re- more solid will your Mind be: So that to bellion of your fen- find no Reluctancy in the inferior Part, ef- fuality be pecially in sudden Tryals and Assaults, is a weakened. true Sign of having obtained the Virtue:

And as far as your Actions are accompanied with a Readiness and Alacrity of Spirit, so far you have just Reason to think you have made a good Progress in this Exercise.

Yet never think your self a Conqueror.

Yet take heed of perswading your self that you are in full Possession of any Virtue, or absolute Master of any one Passion, tho' perhaps you have not a long time, and after many sharp Tryals felt these rebellious

Because vice may be clothed in the habit of Virtue.

Motions; for the Deceit of the Devil, and the Corruption of your Nature may herein be too hard for you, since some things may be really a Vice, which secret Pride cloaths in the Habit of Virtue. And if you further

And you have yet much more to do.

seriously look upon the perfection to which God has called you, you will easily grant, that tho' you had made a much greater progress than you have in the way of perfection, yet you are scarcely entred upon the very borders thereof.

Therefore look forward, upon what you yet want.

And I must here put you in mind that you are still to look forward, and advance on courageously towards those many Virtues you want, without reflecting back on the progress you have made, it being so little: For that is to be left to God, who truly searches and only knows the Hearts; who reveals this Secret to some, and conceals it from others, according to his Divine knowledge

ledge of the Pride and Humility that will ensue thereon, and so as a loving and wise Father, he takes away the danger from some, and gives others an occasion of increasing their Virtue.

Wherefore let the pious Practitioner pursue his Exercises with Patience and Constancy, tho' he does not perceive his own Progress, assuring himself that he shall in due time be sensible of it, when it pleases the Divine Providence for his greater good.

And pursue your Exercises with Patience and Constancy.

# O H A P. XIX.

*How our Enemy endeavours to make the Virtues we have acquired, instrumental to our own Ruin.*

**O**UR subtle and malicious Adversary does not fail to tempt us, even by the Virtues we have acquired, that they may be an occasion of our Fall; that flattering our selves with a vain Satisfaction at the attaining them, we may be raised with the Conceit of it, and so be in danger of falling into the Precipice of Pride. To avoid this danger, fight always with Firmness, and as it were encamped in the open field; that is: Stand firm in the true and humble Acknowledgment of your self, that you are nothing, that you know nothing, that you can do nothing, and that you deserve nothing. Be therefore always upon your Guard, and take care to keep off from you

Our Enemies strive to make us take Pleasure in our Virtues. To avoid this snare persevere in the constant sense of your own Vileness.

H all



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all Thoughts, that may take away this Knowledge of your self: For you ought to look upon them as Enemies that would destroy you, or at least wound you. And that you may the better comprehend the clear Truth, observe this Rule.

To that end consider only what you have of your self, with what you have only of your self. If and not from God. As often as you reflect upon your self, consider only what is your own, and not what you have receiv'd from God, or of his Grace. After this esteem your self such as you find you are, you will see that during the whole Extent of Eternity, you have been a meer Nothing, and that you neither did, nor could do any thing to have a Being. If you think upon the time afterwards, wherein by the pure Goodness of God you enjoy this Being, and consider only what is yours, and leave to God what is his, which is, that infinite

Providence whereby he conducts and supports you, what are you then also but a meer Nothing? Hence it is certain, that in this first Being, considering your self simply with what is yours, you can have no reason to esteem your self, or desire others should think well of you.

3. What good you can do of your self. And as to the State of Grace you are in, and Ability to do good: Is your Nature of it self capable of doing the least good, deprived of the Assistance of God? If in this second Being you reflect upon all the Evil you have done, and those you might have done to this time, if God of his great Mercy had not withheld you, you will easily acknowledge

acknowledge, that your crimes would have been multiplied to a prodigious number and height; not only by reason of the number of Days and Years, but also of the multitude of your wicked Actions and vicious Inclinations; so that you might have been even like the Devil himself: Whence you may well conclude, that if you will not attribute that to your self, which is wholly owing to the Mercy and Goodness of God, and not esteem your self otherwise than as you are in your self, you ought to think your self a greater Sinner every day than others.

But take heed, that this Judgment of your self be accompanied with *Justice*; otherwise it may be very prejudicial. For tho' by this knowledge you have got off your own Misery and Nothing, you have some advantage of a Person, that through his Ignorance thinks himself to be something, and would have others esteem so of him; Nevertheless you will fall into a greater Fault, and be more guilty, if you pretend to pass in the esteem of Men for that which you know you are not. To the end therefore, that the knowledge of your Vileness and Baseness may be sincere, and render you acceptable to God, you are not only to acknowledge your self to be Wicked and Sinful, but also *behave your self as such a one*, treat your self as such, and wish to be accounted and used by others after that manner, that is most suitable to that thought of your self: As refusing all Honour, bearing

So that you may justly think your self the worst of Men.

And be just in your accusation.

And not only acknowledge your own baseness, but use your self accordingly.

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patiently with affronts and ill Usage, con-  
 descending upon all occasions to the mea-  
 nest Employments, and all out of this inten-  
 tion to humble and exercise your self, not  
 out of Pride and Vanity of appearing hum-  
 ble as some may do it.

And keep close to this especially when you are praised or commended. But if it happen sometimes that for your Virtue or any good Works, wherein God vouchsafes to make you an Instrument; you begin to be beloved or praised by others, keep diligently within your self, and let nothing perswade you to let go this certain Truth and Justice, that I have been

speaking of: But turn your Heart to God and say to him: *Never suffer me O my God to attribute to my self any thing which is only due to thy Goodness;* and afterwards reflecting upon the Person that praised you, say within your self, *Why does this Man think me good, when there is none good but God only?* If you take this Method, and Conduct of your self, and resign and leave to God that which belongs to him, you will be in the better Disposition to receive more of his Graces.

But lest the memory of your good Actions should puff you up with Vanity, consider them well, and

But lest the Remembrance of the good Actions you have done, should endanger your being lifted up with Vanity, if you look well into the very best of them, you will find how miserably you have failed in a faithful Correspondence with the Grace of God in doing them, and how far they were from being accompanied with that Diligence, Perfection and Purity of Intention as they ought; so that upon the whole, when



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when they are impartially considered, you will have Reason rather to be ashamed and confounded, than puffed up with Pride and Complacency. For it is very certain, that the Graces and Gifts of God are very much sullied by our Imperfections in the use of them. Besides, if you raise your Minds to the Meditation of the Excellency and Greatness of God, and the Service that is due to so divine and holy a Majesty, you will have little Cause to glory before him, though your Actions had been much more excellent and better than they were; but rather to accuse your self for your Negligence and Deficiency of Duty, and in the Posture of a trembling Penitent, to beg Pardon for what is amiss, saying: *Lord be merciful to me a Sinner.* Or if you also compare your Works with those of other Saints and holy Men, you may then more plainly perceive the Meanness of the best of your Actions.

Learn therefore *Humility*, and acknowledge your self with all the good you have done to be but a meer *Nothing* and unprofitable Servant. This is the best and true Foundation to build all other Virtues upon; and the deeper you lay this Ground-work, the higher you will be able to raise your spiritual Building; but never think you can dig deep enough; but be always striving still to get a deeper Sense of your own Unworthiness.

The Practice of this *Self-knowledge* is of such Importance, that without it all the

you will find the best of them very imperfect.

And that you have no colour to glory in them. But to accuse your self for want of Duty.

Learn therefore *Humility*. Which is the Foundation of all Virtues.

And without it all of

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them will good that you do, will signifie little, tho  
 signifie you were able to attain the Knowledge of  
 little. the greatest Myſteries, or do Miracles; ſo  
 that this Point is never to be preſſed or in-  
 culcated too much.

And it is If therefore you deſire to praife God, ac-  
 the beſt cuſe your ſelf; if you would exalt his di-  
 way of vine Majeſty, dive into your own Miſery;  
 praizing, if you ſeek to find him, climb not up into  
 finding Heaven, but deſcend into the Abyſs of  
 and plea- your own Nothing, and he will come thi-  
 ſing God. ther to you and embrace you, yea, he will  
 communicate himſelf and his Love the more  
 freely and ſenſibly, the more you ſeem ab-  
 ject and vile in your own Eyes, and are  
 pleaſed to have others ſlight you and deſpiſe  
 your Company, as a poor miſerable worth-  
 leſs Creature and Object of their Scorn and  
 Deriſion. Conſider further, what a *Favour*

and *Honour* this is, that God does you in  
 Therefore ſuffering you to be neglected and ſlighted  
 you are by this World, ſince that is the true Mark  
 obliged to him for of his Children; and therefore ſail not to  
 permit- return him your humble and hearty Thanks,  
 ting you and think your ſelf beholden to thoſe that  
 to be de- are ſuch excellent Inſtruments of ſubduing  
 ſpiſed. and mortifying your Pride.

And to But if notwithstanding all theſe Conſi-  
 them that derations, the Subtility of the Devil, your  
 do it. own Ignorance or evil Inclinations, ſhould  
 And be have ſtill the Power over you, to diſquiet  
 always a- and trouble your Mind with Thoughts and  
 ware in Fancies of Vanity, and make ſome Impreſ-  
 this Point ſions of your own Merits and Deſerts, then  
 of the De- you have the more reaſon couragiously to  
 vil and ſtrive  
 your own  
 Inclinati-  
 ons.

strive against, beat down and humble your self, since you find by woful Experience, how Poor a Progress you have made in the way of the Spirit and Knowledge of your self, and what deep Roots of Pride and Vanity you have still remaining within you.

*Of rash Judgment.*

From self-esteem, commonly arises rash Judgment concerning our Neighbour, and is followed by Contempt of their Persons and Detraction from their good Name. This Vice has its beginning and Nourishment from a peevish and proud Inclination: For Pride and rash Judgment grow together, comply with each other and concur insensibly to deceive us; for we take occasion to exalt our selves by judging meanly of others; and we think our selves free from those Imperfections that we are fully perswaded are in our Brethren.

And the Devil no sooner discovers this perverse Disposition in us, but he is busie to keep our senses open to see, hear, examine, and aggravate the Faults of our Neighbours, and to imprint this Imperfection or that Indiscretion of theirs in our Minds. Be therefore very diligent, to avoid his Snares; and when anothers Defects are presented before you, presently withdraw your Thoughts: but if you are solicited to give your judgment, let it be a flat Denial and short Answer; that you

Rash  
Judgment  
springs  
from self-  
esteem.  
And from  
Pride.

The Devil strives to keep open our Senses upon our Neighbours Actions. But we must be vigilant to shun his Snares.



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First by  
denying  
to give  
judgment

have no such Power given you, or if you had any such Priviledge, you could hardly tell how to make a right and sound Judgment, being prevented and prejudiced by so many Passions, that would be apt to byass you from that true Moderation, as would become you on such an Occasion.

Secondly,  
by look-  
ing home-  
ward up-  
on our  
own  
selves.

Secondly: Let the sense of your own Wants and interiour Necessities, so take up your leisure time and thoughts, that seeing how necessary it is, to look homewards and keep about your own Affairs, you may think, you have little time left to spend idly in roving abroad, when you have scarce enough to employ about what concerns your self so much. And this serious Search into your own Wants, will clear your Soul of those ill Humours, that are hovering about it, and apt to breed that dangerous Distemper: And it is ten to

Where  
we may  
find some  
Root of  
the same  
Fault we  
blame in  
them.

one, but you may find in your own Heart a Root of the very same Bitterness you see so plainly in your Neighbour, which is the Reason perhaps it so easily makes such Impression upon yours. When you therefore feel an itching desire of censuring anothers Fault, fall out with your self as if you were equally guilty; and say: Is it possible that I, who am so miserable, not only because I wallow in the same Mire, but am also full of greater Faults and Imperfections, should notwithstanding be so Proud and Presumptuous as to take upon me to Judge another? Thus the Weapons that were pointed at your Neighbour, having pierced your own Heart,

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Heart, may abate and bring down the Swellings thereof.

But when the Fault that is done is manifest, then excuse it with a *charitable Construction*, and piously conclude, that your Brother has many hidden Virtues and Perfections, for the preservation whereof he is thus permitted to fall, to humble him for a time, that he may be afterwards raised to a higher Degree of perfection and favour in the sight of God. But if his Sin be not

only manifest, but scandalous, and proceed from a perverse and obstinate Heart, turn your Thoughts to God's secret Judgments, and you will find some, who outwardly have appeared very notorious Sinners, yet afterwards have shewed very ardent Signs of Holiness, and died very excellent Christians: And others, who were thought to have arrived to the top of Perfection, have fallen away to the nothing. It is your Part therefore

to tremble at the Proceedings of divine Providence, and to remain always careful and fearful of your own Condition, not intermeddling with that of others, which is so far out of the reach of your Knowledge.

Lastly: believe this for a Certainty, that all the good and charitable Constructions you put upon your Neighbours Actions, are the assured Effects of the Holy Spirit; and that all Contempt, rash Censures, and Bitterness of Mind against them are derived from your own corrupt Nature, and the Devils Suggestions. Therefore suffer not any Impressions to rest upon your Soul, as

If the Fault be manifest put a charitable Construction upon it.

If scandalous, have recourse to God's secret Judgments.

And tremble at the proceedings of his Providence.

And know that all Charity proceeds from God's Spirit. And all bitterness from our Corrupt

glance

# 106 Of some particular Stratagems of the Devil.

Nature and the Devil. glance any ways at your Brothers Imperfections, and shut not your Eyes to sleep, before you have excluded such Thoughts from your Heart.

*The Means to defend our selves against the Attempts of our Enemies at the time of Death.*

The way to be Conquerours at our Death. Tho' the whole Course of our Lives be a continual Warfare, yet the most signal and important Day of Battle is the Day of our Death; and whosoever is conquered in that last and inevitable Skirmish, remains hopeless of Victory to all Eternity. Therefore that you may then be ready to bear that

fatal Brunt with Constancy, fall courageously upon your Enemies before-hand: For he that is a valiant Soldier in his life-time, is most likely to be a Conqueror at the hour of his Death, as having by long Experience got the true Use of his Weapon.

Therefore You must endeavour also to make Death study to be familiar with it. familiar to your Thoughts, by often serious Meditation and Discourse about it, which will much abate the Fear of it when it comes, and you will be the freer to resist the Assaults that will be made upon you at that time. The Lovers of the World do not care to hear of this Doctrine, because it hinders them in the Career of that Pleasure, which they pursue with so much Passion and Affection, that it is their greatest Affliction when they are forced to leave it. But you, my dearly Beloved, make



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make timely Preparation for a matter of And  
 so great Importance, and to that end make  
 withdraw your Thoughts from the World, timely  
 and imagine your self often to be alone, Prepara-  
 helpless and comfortless, struggling hand to it.  
 hand with Death; and represent to your  
 Soul those things that you conceive may then  
 most afflict you; and consult daily with your  
 own Heart to remedy all things before it  
 be too late; that you may readily make use  
 thereof in your latest and greatest Necessi-  
 ty. For that which must be acted, and can  
 be but once acted, ought in all reason to  
 be very exactly studied before-hand, lest  
 a Fault be committed, which can never be  
 redressed.

Our subtle Enemy ordinarily makes the Of three  
 strongest Opposition, when we are in the Assaults  
 weakest Condition, especially upon our of our  
 Death-beds, by assaulking us three several Enemies  
 ways (*viz.*) with Temptations against our upon our  
 Belief, with Despair, and with vain Glory. Death-  
 beds.

As to the First, when the Devil sets upon The First  
 you to unsettle and throw down your Faith against  
 with false Arguments, do not then dispute our Faith.  
 with them: For your Reason will then per- The Re-  
 haps be too weak to oppose them; but ra- medy is to  
 ther calling to mind the Principles that the retreat  
 Christian Religion teaches you, and are from your  
 warranted by the Scriptures, resolve upon Under-  
 standing  
 no account to part with them, but turning to your  
 your Heart to God, say: *Lord I believe, help Will.*  
*my Unbelief.* Stand therefore firm upon your  
 ground, and never yield to any Reasons  
 that are suggested.

And

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And if he seem too subtle for you in alleging Authorities of Scriptures, that appear very clear and evident against the Articles of your Faith, assure your self that they are corruptly or fallily quoted, ill applied, or wrong interpreted; and therefore hearken not to them, but humble your self the more before God, and cry earnestly to him to preserve you, when you are so little able to help your self.

And give  
no Answer  
to your Enemies  
Questions.

But to fix your Thoughts upon Christ Crucified. And above all things, keep your Mind and Heart as much fixt as you can upon the Contemplation of your crucified Saviour, and as if he was present with you, discourse often with him and say: O my God, O my Saviour, come speedily to my help, leave me not in this my Necessity, let me not fall from the Truth thou hast taught me, and grant that as I now desire to live in them, so I may constantly die in them to thy Glory, and my Eternal Comfort.

The Second Fault is Despair. When you are to keep close to this Rule.

Secondly: Another of the Devils Design then is to cast us down into Despair, upon the Thought of our former wicked Lives: In which danger keep close to this Rule, that all Reflections upon our Sins, if they be followed with Humility, and true Sorrow for having offended so good a God, and with a firm Confidence in his Goodness, are then good, and proceed from the Grace of good: But if they disquiet your Mind, make you doubtful and distrustful, peevish and fearful, assure your self they are plainly the Effects of Satan's Suggestions. For tho' the Heinousness or Ingratitude of your Sins

*Of some particular Stratagems of the Devil.* 109

Sins be such, as to make you think you justly deserve to be eternally damned for them, and have little Reason upon that account to expect Salvation; yet never let them take away your Hope and Confidence in the Mercy of God, through Jesus Christ. Humble your self therefore often under the Sense of your Sins, but withal acknowledge the infinite Love and Goodness of God to you; which will be the means to confound and conquer your Enemy with his own Weapons, which he had prepared for your Destruction.

To have a perfect Hope and humble Confidence in God.

So when the Vileness of your Sins is presented before you, hate them as much as you can, being so odious in the Sight of God; yet be sure not to lose a steadfast Hope in his Promises, tho' such Passages of Scripture should come into your Mind,

And never to distrust his Mercy.

as declare his Terrors and Threatnings, and that you perhaps are one of those that God has cast away: For all such are plainly the Temptations of the Enemy, to make you leave off your Repentance. Therefore at such times you may humbly say: *Thou hast just Reason, O my Lord and Saviour, to shake me off for my Sins; but if thou shouldest be extream to mark what is done amiss, who can abide? But with thee there is Mercy and plenteous Redemption. Therefore tho' I deserve indeed to be damned, if thou shouldst deal with me according to my Wickedness, yet thou hast redeemed me by thy Sons most precious Death and Passion, and therefore I will never let go my Hopes in thy Mercy, for thou wilt save me,*

And the Merits of his Passion.



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me, O my Redeemer, for thine own Glories sake  
and upon this assurance, I freely resign my self  
into thine Hands, do with me and dispose of me  
as thou best pleasest; for thou art my God: Tho  
be kill me, yet will I put my Trust in him.

The third Assault, you, is with vain Glory and Presumption.  
is of vain And here you are to be equally wary of  
Glory. the other extreme, and never to admit

willingly of the least Content or Complacency in your self or any good Actions you have done, but to refer all the Goodness that seems to be in you, purely to the great Mercy of God, and the Merits of Christ's Passion. Abase your self to the very bottom of your Heart, as long as there is the least Breath in your Body, and acknowledge God to be the true Fountain of all your Goodness; look not at all upon your own Deserts, but rely wholly upon his Mercy; distrust your self and trust in your Saviour, and think what poor Provision you have made against this Passage of your Death and Journey to Eternity; and how vain and useless all your Endeavours will prove, unless God will be pleased to put his helping Hand and cover you under the sacred Wings of his divine Protection.

4. These are the common and ordinary Stratagems which our Enemies make use of in this last Passage of our Life, with many other Sorts of Temptations according to each ones particular Inclination and Disposition. Stand therefore timely to your Arms, before this great Day of Battle stea  
upon

upon you, and fight valiantly while you are in Health against all your violent Passions and dangerous Imperfections, that you may be prepared at that time, lest you may never afterwards have either Time or Power to perform it. For *there is no Work or Understanding in the Grave whither we are going*; Eccles. 9. v. 10.

C H A P. XX.

*That we must never flatter our selves, that we have wholly subdued our Enemies; but often return to the Exercise of Virtue, as if we were beginning again.*

**I** Have yet one thing more to put you in mind of, which is, that you never persuade your self that you have gotten an entire Victory over any of your Passions, tho' perhaps for a long time together you have felt no Motions thereof; but that you often renew your accustomed spiritual Exercises as if you were but a young Beginner, newly entring upon a Christian Life.

For if we consider, and desire to follow the Perfection God has called us to, we shall find it to be so high and hard to be attained, that after our best Endeavours and great Successes we shall scarcely presume to say, we have made any considerable Progress therein; and besides, that which seems to us a Virtue, may indeed be sometimes a Vice, our Judgment being deceived

deceived or byassed by some secret Passion  
or Inclination.

## C H A P. XXI.

### Of Prayer.

The  
fourth  
Weapon  
is Prayer.

**W**E have hitherto by the Grace and Assistance of God treated of the *Distrust of our selves, Confidence in God, and continual Exercise*, three necessary means to overcome our Passions, and conquer the disordered Motions of our sensual Desires. It remains now that we speak of the fourth, which is *Prayer*; which we may say is not only the most powerful, but the only means of obtaining from God all manner of good.

A further  
Description  
of  
Prayer.

For Prayer is the Food, the Comfort and Support of the Soul during its Pilgrimage upon Earth: It is a secure Bridge for it to pass over the several Seas of Adversity and Prosperity: It is a Defence against Vices and Temptations, a Key that opens for us a Way to Heavenly Treasures: A Door of holy Thoughts; and lastly, an invincible Fortress, and sure Refuge and Place of Retreat from the violent Assaults of our Enemies.

Which  
must have  
these Properties.

But to the end, your Prayer may be very efficacious and agreeable to God, observe carefully these four Things; *First* your Heart must be enflamed with an ardent De-



fire of serving God after that manner which will be most acceptable to him.

To obtain this enflamed Desire, consider How to obtain this De-fire. that Almighty God, by reason of his admirable Excellencies of Goodness, Majesty, Wisdom, Beauty, and other infinite Perfections, is most worthy to be served and honoured by you and all Creatures: That to serve and help you, his Greatness has condescended to compassionate your Weakness and Necessities; and to suffer for you in his sacred Humanity for many Years together, in which time his Goodness provided such Remedies to cure your diseased Soul, and purge it from the Filthiness of Sin; that he did not spare to shed his most precious Blood, and at last underwent a most cruel and ignominious Death upon the Cross for your sake; That his Wisdom has also procured the most effectual Means to recover you from the Slavery of Sin, to enable you to master your self, to conquer your Enemies, and to become a Child of God, by being Partaker of a divine Nature.

*Secondly*: You must believe with a firm Secondly, and lively Faith, that God will give you a lively Faith. all that is necessary for his Service, and your Salvation.

This holy *Confidence* is the Vessel, which The excellent Virtue of Faith. the divine Goodness fills with the Treasures of his Graces; and the greater it is, the richer and the more laden will your Prayer return into your own Bosom. For how can our most gracious God fail to make us

Partakers of all good Things, when he himself has commanded us to ask them, and promised his holy Spirit to those that are importunate with him for it with Faith and Perseverance?

Thirdly,  
Conformity to  
God's ho-  
ly Will.

*Thirdly*: You must come to Prayer with an Intention of doing the Will of God, and not your own Will, whether it be in demanding or receiving what you ask for: (That is to say) that you make your Prayer and Desire to be heard, because you hope it is his Pleasure. In short your Intention ought to be *to conform your Will to the Will of God, and not to oblige God's Will to condescend to yours.*

Because  
your Will  
is Subject  
to Error.  
But the  
Divine  
Will is  
infallibly  
right.

And this you are to do so much the rather, because your Will being infected with *self-love*, is Subject to Error and Forgetfulness of it self, and its true Good, and so knows not what it asks: But the divine Will is always accompanied with unspeakable Goodness, and so can never fail, but is the Rule and chief Director of all other Wills, deserving to be followed and obeyed by them all. You are therefore always to petition for those Things which are conformable to God's Will; and when you suspect whether some Desire of yours be truly such, to make your Demand conditional; and not to wish for it, so as to be anxious about it, but only so far as it pleases God you should obtain it.

Fourthly,  
a Conjun-  
ction with  
the former  
Exercise.

In the fourth and last place, your Prayer and the aforesaid Exercises are to be so joyned together, that they be wholly insepa-

inseparable, and that they never go one without the other: For tho' you pray never so long nor so much for any Virtue, unless you strive and labour and exercise your self in the way to get it, this would be rather a tempting of God than praying to him.

*Fifthly*: Remember that before you demand new Favours, you are to render humble Thanks for those you have formerly received; by these or the like Expressions. *O my good and gracious Lord God, who hast made me, redeemed me, and rescued me from so many Dangers oftner than I my self know or can conceive: Help me now also, and deny not to grant this my present Petition, tho' I have been hitherto rebellious to thy Will, and ungrateful to thy Goodness.*

*Fifthly, Thank- giving for Favours received.*

And if your Demand be for some particular Virtue you now stand in need of, by reason of some Temptation, Trouble or Contradiction that presseth you, forget not to thank him for that occasion of your Tryal and Exercise, which through his gracious Assistance may promote so much your spiritual good.

*Sixthly*: Since Prayer hath its whole force, power and hope of Effect from God's Goodness and Mercy, from Christ's Merits and Passion, and from the divine Promise, therefore you may very properly introduce your Requests by some of these following Sentences: *O my God, grant unto thy Servant, I beseech thee, this Grace, for thy infinite Goodness sake. Let thy most dear Sons Merits prevail*

*Sixthly: Reflection upon Goodness and Promise; And Christ's Passion.*



## Of Prayer.

*with thee to grant my Petition. Remember thy Beloved Son in whom thou art always well pleased. Think upon thine old loving Kindness, and for thy Promise sake, O Lord incline thine Ears to my Petition!*

Seventh-  
ly, Perse-  
verance.

*Seventhly:* You are to pray with *Perseverance*, for if the continued Importunity of the Widow in the Gospel did at last move the hard-hearted Judge to give her what she asked; *Luc. 18. v. 5.* How much more reason have we to expect the Answer of our perseverant Petition from him who is Mercy and Goodness it self?

Prayer  
must be  
strengthened  
with  
Hope.

After your Prayer, have a lively and unshaken *Hope*, that God of his infinite Goodness will grant you the Grace you have demanded of him, or something better for you, or both together. And though you are a good while without perceiving the Effects of your Prayer, yet remain constant in your Hopes, and never for that grow negligent either in your Prayer, or Exercise.

And be  
not dis-  
couraged  
though  
God seems  
to reject  
your  
Prayer.

And tho' it may seem sometimes as if God rejected you and your Prayer together, yet let not this discourage you, but humble your self still more and more before him, labouring to stir up and increase your Faith, and comfort your self, by your Saviour's Promises to those that persevere: Nay, provided you stand firm and constant in such violent Repulses as it were, and seeming despising your Prayer, you will be more pleasing to him, and procure afterwards the greater Favours from him:

There-

Therefore you are always to be thankful, and praise him, as well when you fear he has not heard you, as if you had obtained what you had asked; and in all Events whether good or bad, humbly submit and resign your self to the infallible Wisdom of his Providence, acknowledging that he is always equally good, wise, and full of Love to you. And al-ways thank him as well when he grants as when he denies.

## C H A P. XXII.

*What inward Mental Prayer is, and how to make use thereof.*

**M**ental Prayer is an Elevation of the Mind to God, with an actual or virtual Demand of what we desire: We may call that virtual Petition, when lifting up the Mind to God to obtain some Grace, we humbly represent and lay before him our Necessities, without saying, or specifying any thing else; as when I raise my Mind to God, and there in his Presence I acknowledge that I have no Power to do any Good, nor defend or deliver my self from any Evil. This Confession made after this manner before God is a Prayer, which virtually demands what we stand in need of. Mental Prayer includes al-ways ei-ther a vir-tual Peti-tion of some-thing.

And this implies an humble Supplication to his divine Majesty, that he will vouchsafe to supply my Necessities. And the more real and manifest this Confession of

## Of Mental Prayer.

your Want and Weakness is, the more efficacious your Desire, and the more lively your Confidence, the more force and value will your Demand have.

There is also another kind of virtual Mental Prayer, which consists in a simple beholding of God in our Minds, continuing silent and quiet in his Presence without Words or Expressions, expecting as it were and waiting upon him for his Grace and the Accomplishment of what we before have actually demanded. In short we this way present to God the Temple of our Souls empty, to the end he may possess and fill it with himself, his Gifts and Graces, which he will not fail to do; and withal, cleanse, purifie and richly adorn it, making it fit for such a Guest.

The Excellency of this manner of Prayer;

And whoever will set himself to learn and practise this way of Prayer, and frequently make use of it and persevere in it, will soon find the Excellency, Nobleness and high Advantages of it, it being the best Defence against all sorts of Temptations, the most efficacious way of settling and composing our distracted Minds, of subduing and rooting up our Passions, and the true and most solid Means of attaining all manner of Virtues.

Or an actual asking by Words expressed in the Mind.

*Actual* Petition is made when we ask any Grace of God by Words expressed in the Mind, in this or like manner: *Lord, I beseech thee, give me this Grace, this Benefit, for the Honour of thy Name. Or thus: O Lord, I stedfastly believe it is thy Will, I should beg of thee*



*thee this Grace I so much stand in need of. Do thou therefore O Lord, make me Partaker of it, and accomplish thy holy Will in me.*

Sometimes you may represent to him the Dangers you are in from the Malice of the Devil; sometimes the miserable Root of Sin, that remains and is so powerful in you. Add thereto your Weakness and Inability to resist them; saying thus: *Lord consider mine Enemies how many they are, how they bear a tyrannous Hate against me; my Soul melteth for Heaviness, strengthen thou me according to thy Word: As for me I am poor and needy, hast thee unto me, O God: Thou art my Helper and Deliverer, make no long tarrying, O my God!*

Psal. 25.  
Psal. 119.  
28, 40, 17.

## C H A P. XXIII.

*How to join Meditation to mental Prayer.*

**W**Hen you have leisure to set your self to Prayer for a good space of time, as for an Hour or more, you may begin your Prayer with the *Meditation* of the Life and Passion of our Saviour Jesus Christ, applying always his Actions to the Virtues you desire to obtain. For Example: suppose the Grace you would obtain, be the Virtue of *Patience*, and that you would take for the Subject of your Meditation, some part of the Mystery of the Sufferings of Jesus Christ; consider how barbarously they tore away his Garments from him,

Take some Points of Christ's Death and Passion. And apply each Passage to the Virtue you demand: As for Example to *Patience*.

how cruelly they thrust a Crown of Thorns upon his Head, how he was nailed to the Cross as an innocent Lamb, and afterwards lifted up into the Air with unspeakable Pain of his Wounds, and new Anguish to his Body whole, as you may read it in the 26th of *Matthew*.

Consider  
how  
meekly he  
suffered ;

And learn  
thereby to  
suffer pa-  
tiently  
your smal-  
ler Cros-  
ses.  
And com-  
pel your  
Will to  
take them  
up quiet-  
ly.

To these or the like Points, you may first apply your Senses to feel, and see the Wounds tearing, the Pain and Torment that your dear Saviour suffered in these Passages in each Part of his Body in particular, and in all of them in general: Then pass on afterwards to the Consideration of his most holy Soul, endeavouring as much as you can, to conceive and penetrate in- to the Patience and Meekness wherewith he endured all these grievous Afflictions and Torments, and how ready he was to suffer much more for his Father's Glory and our Salvation. After this, behold him hanging on the Cross compleating all his Suffering with his Death; think your self just by him, and contemplate him, and consider with what ardent Desire he did all this for you, that you by his Exam- ple, might endure with Patience the small Crosses and Adversities that befall you; and as he prayed to his Father for you, so you should implore his Grace to bear and overcome this Cross you now la- bour under, or any other, with Quiet and Constancy; thus raising and strength- ning your Mind with full Resolution to suffer it, turn your Heart to God the Father,

Father, humbly begging of him the Virtue of *Patience*, and that he will be pleased to remember the strong Cries and Prayers of his Son, on the Cross for you.

CH A P. XXIV.

*Another way of helping your Prayers by Meditation.*

**Y**OU may also pray and meditate after another manner; as thus: when you have well considered the Suffering and Labours of Jesus Christ, and have applyed your self to get a Sense of them, to have a Fellow suffering with him, and you have endeavoured to imprint upon your Mind the Magnanimity and Courage, the Love and Affection with which he went through them; you may pass on from these excessive Pains and great degrees of his Patience, to two other Considerations: *First*, of the Merits of your Saviour. And *Secondly*, of the Content and Satisfaction that his Eternal Father received from the perfect Obedience of his Son; and representing all these things to the Father of Mercies, earnestly beseech him and confidently hope from him, for the sake of his Son's Merits, the Grace you so much desire; and thus you may put up your Petitions, not only after meditating upon any Mystery of Christ's Passion, but also upon any other Action or Suffering of our Saviours Life.

To pray and meditate together.

By considering Christ's Merits, and the Content his Heavenly Father took in his Obedience. And presenting them both to God.



## C. H. A. P. XXV.

*How to meditate upon the Passion of Jesus Christ,  
to excite in us Holy Affections.*

How to  
enkindle  
Holy Af-  
fections  
in Medi-  
tating on  
the Passi-  
on.

**H**itherto I have shewed you the manner of praying and meditating upon the Passion of our Lord, to obtain his Graces. Now I will instruct you how you may thereby stir up and enkindle many other good Motions and holy Affections in your Soul, whereof I shall here mention some; as for Example: You propose to meditate upon our Saviours being *crowned with Thorns*; you may then think thus with your self: How your most Amiable and Innocent Lord Jesus was in Contempt and Derision, cloathed with a Purple Coat; how his Head, which ought not to have been looked upon without Reverence and Respect, was crowned with sharp Thorns, beaten with hard Canes, and besmeared with filthy Spittle: How this King of Eternal Glory, who is adored in Heaven by so many Thousands of Angels, was mocked, laugh'd at and disgraced, while he was upon Earth by the feigned and false Reverences, that the insolent Rabble paid him out of Derision.

By refle-  
cting up-  
on Christs  
Love and  
Goodness.

To excite in you by these and such like Meditations, true Motions and Feelings of Love; elevate your Heart often in the midst of them, to consider and get a more perfect Knowledge of the infinite Goodness of

God, and his Love towards you, in being willing to undergo so many Torments to save you, and consequently endeavour to enflame your Heart more and more with his divine Love. The Consideration of so much Love and Goodness, will be also very apt to melt you into Grief, and true Contrition for having so often offended this your most merciful and bountiful Lord and Saviour, who so readily suffered all imaginable Affliction for your Sins.

To raise also a firm Hope in your Soul by such Meditations, consider that it was the dearly Beloved Son of God that embraced so many Miseries, and was reduced to such Extremities to free you from the Slavery of Sin, and the Power of the Devil, to reconcile you to his Eternal Father, that you might have Confidence to come to him in all your Necessities.

How to  
get a con-  
stant  
Hope.

And if you would further by meditating upon your Saviours Passion, move yourself to *spiritual Joy*, draw your Thoughts from the Consideration of his Sufferings, and pass on to the benefit, profit, and effects thereof, that they are not only sufficient to wash away your Sins, but also the Sins of the whole World; that they appease the Anger of God, overthrow the Dominion of Satan, take away the Sting of Death, recover Lost Man, and supply the Places of fallen Angels: Add to all this the Joy of the sacred Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the whole Church, militant and triumphant, for the benefits

And a  
Spiritual  
Joy.

benefits issuing from our Saviours Death and Passion.

As also  
Affecti-  
ons of  
Sorrow  
and Com-  
passion.

If you would have your Heart affected with *Sorrow* and *Compassion* towards your suffering Saviour, think further upon the deep and afflicting Anguish, Grief and Sadness of his most Holy Soul, who being fully sensible of the eminent and infinite Dignity of his Father, (whom he loved above all that we can conceive :) must needs be grieved above measure to see this benign and most bountiful Creator of all things so maliciously and frequently offended by his own Creatures, after they had received so many and great Benefits from him. And moreover in what an unconceivable Sadness he was, to foresee so many Souls that were so dear to him, condemned to Eternal Punishment by their own Fault. And further, to aggravate the Affliction of his Soul, how deep did those immense Dolours of his dearly beloved Mother pierce his Heart to the bottom? And lastly, being all knowing he was in a strange Anguish to foresee all the Torments that so many Martyrs and holy Virgins should endure for his sake.

And Acts  
of Contri-  
tion for  
your Sins.

While you are thus meditating, you may often reflect upon your own Sins and Defects as the cause and occasion of all these his Afflictions, and from thence conceive Acts of true Sorrow and Contrition at your base Ingratitude, to humble you before his Divine Majesty. And be assured that this is the most pleasing and acceptable Com-  
passion



passion, when you persecute your disordered Passions and Affections, and strive to ruin and root those Enemies out of your Heart, which were the cause of your dear Saviours cruel Passion. And to move you to a perfect Hatred of Sin, think seriously that all these his Sufferings were to stir you up to detest all Sin, and to fight the more courageously against your corrupt Passions and Affections, and them especially that are most predominant in you, and the most offensive to your Saviour.

*Lastly,* That by these Meditations upon Christ's Death and Passion, you may be moved to the admiration of his Goodness; consider, he that suffered these things, is the Word Incarnate, God himself, who was made Man for us, that those for whom he suffered, are vile and miserable Creatures, who have always offended him. That those who inflicted these Cruelties upon him, were the most infamous and very Refuse of the People; that the Afflictions he suffered were Disgrace, Contempts, Derisions, Torments and Wounds so great and so cruel as cannot be expressed or imagined.

To excite you to the greater Admiration, consider after what Manner and with what Courage he suffered all this; with what Patience, Meekness and willingness of Mind, he behaved himself among so many Torments and Ignominies, while the Hearts of his Persecutors were so full of Rage and Cruelty against him, retained

And to  
admire  
God's  
Goodness.

*Of Meditating upon the Passion.*

retained still for them a Heart full of Sweetness and pure Love, praying for them, while he was dying by their Hands.

*A further Declaration of the Profit that may be drawn from the Meditation upon Christ's Passion.*

The first Profit, is a Confusion at the sight of our Imperfections.

Among the many Advantages that may be drawn from this holy Exercise, one is, that you must needs conceive not only a Sorrow for your Sins past, but feel also a Shame and Confusion in your Soul, to see those unruly Passions which crucified our Saviour, still alive and deep rooted in your Heart.

2. A desire of and demand of Pardon

Another great Profit which proceeds from the former, is, that being truly sensible of your Sins, and ashamed of your Ingratitude, you will heartily desire and humbly beg Pardon for what is past, and Grace to amend for the future; and as an Acknowledgment of your extraordinary Obligation for what our Saviour has done for your sake, you will resolve to serve him and love him, and suffer for him hereafter.

A Persecution of your Passions.

The Third Profit is: That you will fall out with your perverse Inclinations and Passions, and persecute them to Death, though they be never so little.

An Imitation of Christ's Virtues.

The Fourth is, you will force your self to the utmost of your Power, to imitate the Virtues of your dear Saviour, who endured this not only to save you and satisfy for your

your Sins, but also to give you an Example to follow his Steps.

*Another way of meditating on the Passion.*

There is another Method of meditating on Christ's Passion, which you may make use of as it suits your Devotion and Occasion. If you desire, for Example, to obtain *Patience* in Imitation of your Redeemer, consider these Points following:

By considering.

( 1. ) How the afflicted Soul of your Saviour upon the Cross, behaves it self towards his Heavenly Father ?

( 2. ) What the Father doth towards the Soul of his Son ?

( 3. ) What the Soul doth towards it self, and its sacred Body !

( 4. ) What your Saviour doth towards you ?

( 5. ) What you should do towards your Saviour ?

*First* ; Consider, how the Soul of Jesus Christ being intirely fixed upon God, is amazed to behold this infinite and incomprehensible Majesty, (in respect whereof all things created are meerly *Nothing* :) submitting, (tho' immutable in his Glory :) to the Suffering of such ungrateful Usage upon Earth for Man, who has behaved himself towards him after such a rebellious and injurious manner ; and how it adores, thanks, and offers up it self entirely to the Disposition of the divine Will ?

How Christ's Soul carried it self toward his Father.

*Secondly* :



2. How  
the Fa-  
ther to-  
wards  
him.

*Secondly:* Consider how God himself wil-  
leth and exciteth the Soul of our Saviour  
to suffer for your sake, all those Blows,  
Scourges, Revilings, and Death upon the  
Cross, assuring him how acceptable it was  
to him, to see his Patience tried and tri-  
umphing among so many Sorts of Affronts  
and Afflictions.

3. How  
the Soul  
toward it  
self and its  
sacred Bo-

*Thirdly:* Passing on to the Soul of Christ,  
consider how he with his Understanding  
(which is all Light) knowing how highly  
his Passion pleased God; and with his Will  
(which is all enflamed,) loving the divine  
Majesty beyond Measure, which thus invi-  
ted him to suffer for you; he disposes him-  
self joyfully, readily and contentedly, to  
obey his Will and Pleasure: And who can  
dive into the Depths of those Desires, that  
this pure and loving Soul of our Saviour  
had to suffer for your sake? It found it self  
in a Labyrinth of Troubles, yet was casting  
about to encounter new ways of suffering;  
and therefore freely gave up it self and its  
innocent Body as a Prey to the Pleasure,  
and Cruelty of the basest and worst of  
Villains.

4. How  
your Sa-  
viour car-  
ries him-  
self to-  
wards  
you.

*Fourthly:* Consider your sweet Saviour in  
the midst of his bitter Torments, fixing his  
Eyes full of Tears and Tenderness upon  
you, and imagine him thus expostulating  
with you: *Behold my Child, whether your un-  
mortified Affections and unruly Desires have  
brought me, because you would not use a little  
Violence to your self to resist them; see how much  
and how willingly I suffer for your sake, and to*  
give

give you a perfect Example of Patience: I conjure you therefore, by all these my Sufferings and Sorrows, that you will willingly and contentedly carry this or any other Cross that I shall think fit to lay upon you, that you would resign your self up to bear courageously the Persecutions that befall you in Body or Fame, how hard or contemptible so ever they be. O, could you but conceive the Comfort I should receive in your Patience! You may read it in these my Wounds, wherein my Love is written in bloody Characters: And if I your Lord and Saviour, am reduced to this Extremity for your Love, why will you not consent to endure a little to satisfy my Hearts Desire?

Fifthly: Consider, who it is that thus speaks to you? 'Tis the King of Glory, Jesus Christ, true God and true Man; observe the Greatness of his Grief, the Variety of his Torments and the Indignity of his Disgraces, bad enough for the most infamous Malefactor, yet you see him amidst all these, not only immoveable, meek and patient, but even joyfully contented with them; and as a little Water rather strengthens than extinguishes a well kindled Fire; so by the Encrease of his Torments (which his excessive Love thought but little,) his Content and desire of suffering was more and more enkindled and augmented. And all this he endured by no external Violence, or for any Self-interest, but (as he has told you) for your Love, and that you might imitate him and exercise your self in the Virtue of Patience. And then penetrating

5. How  
you  
should  
carry  
self to-  
wards  
your Sa-  
viour.

K

into

into what he desires you should do, and the Content you would give him by the Practice of Patience, produce Acts of a passionate Will to bear not only this Cross patiently and joyfully, but any greater, that so you may imitate him more perfectly, and give him the more abundant Joy and Satisfaction.

And by imprinting thus in your Mind a lively Image of his Sufferings and Constancy therein, you will be ashamed to think your Patience not so much as a Shadow of his, and your Affections scarce any at all, compared with his.

The Crucified Jesus the best Book to read in.

The Crucified Jesus (my Beloved) is the best Book you can read in, and the liveliest Image of Perfection you can draw from: For being the Book of Life, it not only informs your *Understanding* by Words, but also enflames your *Will* by Example. The World is full of Books, but none does so speedily and perfectly teach the true Means of all Virtues, as the Contemplation of your suffering Saviour. But they who employ their Time in deploring his Passion and admiring his Patience, and apply it not to their particular Practice when Occasions are offered; do like those Soldiers, who before the Battle, talk of great matters and speak high Words in their Tents, but upon the first sight of their Enemies in a Fight, quit their Colours, throw down their Arms and forsake the Field: And indeed, what can be more cowardly and unworthy, than to contemplate the Virtues of



of our Lord and Saviour, and to love and admire them; and presently to forget them and refuse to practise them, when Occasion is offered to exercise our selves in their Imitation?

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C H A P. XIX.

*Of sensible Devotion and of Dryness.*

**Y**OU are to be very careful upon the feeling of any *sensible Devotion*, to turn it to a right use; for our Enemy will be seeking afterward to puff us up with Pride, and to make us forget our Duty and the Amendment of our Lives: So that we have reason always to fear our selves in what may be the Consequence of this Devotion, especially if there be a great deal of Gust and Sweetness in it.

Therefore when you find your Devotion raised with spiritual Delights, tho' they may be the Effects of God's Grace, yet *never suffer your Mind to rest upon them, nor forget your own Misery and nothing; but think of driving out of your Heart, with more Care and more Hatred of your self than ever, all inordinate Affections that you may have to any thing whatever; learn to seek nothing but God alone, and how to please him: For by this means, these sensible Delights will have their proper Effects.*

How to make the best Use of sensible Devotion.

Dryness, Dulness or Barrenness in Devotion, may proceed from three Causes: Three Causes of

spiritual  
Dryness.

It may come from the *Devil*, to discourage us and make us quit our spiritual Enterprize that we may again return to the Diversions and Entertainments of the World: It may also come *from our selves*, by our own Fault and Negligence: It may come from Grace, either to excite us to more Diligence, and to abstract us from all other Cares and Concerns, but those which regard God and his Honour, or our Perfection, by a perfect Disengagement from all things, even spiritual Pleasures; lest the Affection we might have for them, should divide our Hearts, which God would have wholly his. When therefore you are troubled with Dryness and Dulness, enter into your self, and examine, whether it be not through your own Faults, that you have brought this upon your self? if so, humble your self and strive against it, but not with an eager Desire to recover the sensible Sweetness of Grace, but to separate from you all that may be displeasing to God.

Therefore  
you are to  
search out  
the true  
Cause.

And keep  
on your  
accustom-  
ed Ex-  
ercises.

And let it be your continual Care *not to neglect any of your spiritual Exercises*, notwithstanding such Disgusts, but prosecute them with your utmost Diligence, how fruitless soever they appear, and drink this bitter Potion with Courage and Resolution; and if it be mingled sometimes with such thick Darkness and Troubles in the Mind, that you cannot tell how to swallow it, nor which way to turn your self, yet persevere with Patience and Quietness, sitting solitary under this Cross, not seeking to divert  
it

it by any Earthly Pleasures, though the World or any Creature should present themselves to you; and you may do well to conceal your Cross from every Body, except some one particular Friend, who has experienced the same, that you may know from him how to behave your self in this Condition, conformable to the Will of God.

And seek  
no out-  
ward  
Comforts.

And the chief End you should propose in making use of the Communion, Prayer, or other spiritual Exercises at such times, ought to be rather to obtain Strength to support your Pain, than to mitigate it: And if your Mind is so troubled or distracted, that you find great difficulty to meditate or pray, keep only a willing Mind, and supply it with Ejaculatory Prayers, and frequent Elevations of the Mind to God, making use of these or such like Sentences.

Nor pray  
to have it  
mitiga-  
red.

*My Heart panteth, my Strength hath failed me, and the Light of mine Eyes is gone from me.* Psal. 38.

*How long wilt thou forget me O Lord, for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy Face from me? How long shall I seek Counsel in my Soul, and be so vexed in my Heart?* Psal. 13. 1.  
Psal. 22.

*My God, my God, look upon me, why hast thou forsaken me, and art so far from my Health, and from the Words of my Complaint?*

Or you may say: O my Lord, O my Love, why dost thou leave thy poor Servant thus all alone, who has no Comfort in himself, and desires none from any Creature? What shall he do if he find it not in thee? whither wilt thou go



poor strayed Sheep; if thou hearest not the Voice of thy divine Shepherd? O living Fountain, shall I never more become worthy to taste one drop of thy Sweetness! O my God, and only Refuge, to whom shall I have Recourse if thou leavest me? How is it possible for my dry Soul to subsist in this Desert, without the Refreshment of thy Heavenly Dew?

In this Affliction remember how your Saviour was left comfortless in the Garden, &c.

When you find your self thus desolate and abandoned, remember how your dear Saviour was also left comfortless by his Heavenly Father, in the Garden, on the Cross, and in his greatest Afflictions; therefore joyn with him often in those Words: *not my Will, but thy Will be done*; which proceeding from the depth of your Heart, will sweetly wound the Heart of God, and move him to compassionate your Misery, either by sending you Comfort, or giving you Courage, Constancy and Resignation to bear it.

For, to suffer for God, is the best Prayer, and makes you truly devout.

And be assured of this, that suffering this Dryness or any Affliction with Patience and humble Resignation, is a very acceptable Prayer to God, and makes you truly devout; because *true Devotion is a Readiness of Will to follow Christ with the Cross, upon our Shoulders*. And it is by this way that he calls and invites us to come to him, to seek God for himself. If therefore spiritual Persons (especially Women,) would seriously examine their Progress in the way of Perfection and Piety by this Rule, and not by the feeling of sensible Devotion, (which many chiefly regard) they would make better

And not sensible Devotion

better use of such Comforts in their Exercises of Devotion, which are sent them from God, to make them more zealous in resigning themselves to his holy Will, which disposes all things to our good and Eternal Salvation.

There is also a great Error and Mischief <sup>The Error of many.</sup> into which these Persons are ordinarily apt to fall, especially those that are weak. When they are tormented with unclean blasphemous or perverse Thoughts, they presently become fearful and lose Courage, as if God had quite forsaken them, and they cannot tell how to perswade themselves, that his Holy Spirit should inhabit a Heart full of such wicked Thoughts; and they so entangle themselves in these troublesome Fancies, till by degrees they fall into a strange Faint-heartedness, and from thence into Despair; so that often to get rid of it and recover their Quiet, they leave off their good Exercises, and turn to their former Course of Life; wherein they shew themselves little grateful to God, who would not have permitted them to be troubled and tempted after that manner, but to give them a more perfect Knowledge of themselves, what wretched, frail and desolate Creatures they are, and that they might the more seriously seek and draw near to him.

That which you ought to do in such Distresses, is to procure to your self by <sup>What you are to do</sup> them a greater Confusion at the sight of <sup>in this Distress.</sup> your Baseness, and let your Thoughts dwell

upon the Consideration of your miserable Corruption; because God by this means would have you know it, and be convinced that you by Nature have such a violent Inclination to all manner of evil, that without the divine Assistance you would be every moment in danger of falling into Ruin.

After this, seeing that God by the danger he shews you that you are in, would have you approach nearer to him, in obliging you of Necessity to have recourse to him in Prayer: raise up your Heart with a firm Hope and Confidence in him, and give him Thanks for the Favour of such Troubles and Temptations, and take this for a Certainty, that such Sort of Thoughts are *easier driven away by a quiet and prudent bearing of them, than by resisting them with Earnestness and Inquietude.*

## C H A P. XXVII.

*How the Blessed Sacrament is a very powerful Means of conquering our Passions.*

**T**HE Holy Sacrament is received for many Ends: But if you design to receive it particularly for your Assistance in destroying your vicious Inclinations, you may do it after this manner.

Meditate  
the Day  
before,  
upon  
your Sa-

The Day before the Communion, if you have opportunity, you may begin in the Evening to consider the Desire that Jesus Christ has to unite himself to you, by the means



means of this Sacrament, and to help you to subdue your unmortified Passions. This Desire is so great that no created Understanding can comprehend it: But that you may conceive a little of it, consider these two Things.

*First*; How much this great Majesty takes pleasure to be with us, and dwell in us, since the Holy Scripture assures us, that his Delight is to be with the Children of Men, and in requital of this Love, he only requires our Hearts saying: *My Son give me thy Heart.*

*Secondly*: How much he hates Sin, which hinders his nearer Union with us, and is directly opposite to his infinite Perfections; for being the supream Being, the pure Light, and perfect Beauty, it is impossible but he must have an unconceivable Hatred and Abomination for Sin, which is meer Darknes, Imperfection, and the Corruption of our Souls.

And to imprint this earnest Desire of your Saviour the deeper upon your Heart, meditate often upon what is recorded in the old and new Testament, especially about his Passion and cruel Death, all which he suffered to deliver us from the miserable Slavery of Sin, and to destroy the Power of such Affections and self-love as are contrary to his divine Will.

These Considerations having made you sensible of the Desire that Jesus Christ has to enter into your Soul; excite in your self

viours desire to unite himself to you.

And how he hates Sin.

And moves your Soul to a reci-

procal de-  
fire to-  
wards  
him.

an ardent Affection to receive and enter-  
tain him, by these or such Ejaculatory  
Prayers: *Come, O my sweet Saviour, and help  
thy miserable Creature to conquer her Enemies!*  
*When will that happy Moment come, that I  
shall receive thee O my God, the Bread of Life,*  
*that being fortified by it, I may overcome all*  
*my disordered Passions and Affections!*

And then  
provoke  
your Passi-  
ons to  
Battle.

And when you perceive your self streng-  
thened by the Hope of your Saviours co-  
ming into your Soul, then provoke your  
Passions to Battle, especially that which is  
your greatest Enemy; fight with them,  
check them and repress them with many  
repeated Acts of Hatred against them and  
of enflamed Affections for the Virtue which  
is opposit to them. This may be your  
Evenings Imployment, and the Morning  
Exercise as soon as you are awake.

Being  
near the  
time of  
Communi-  
on, you  
are to fear.

But when the time of receiving the Ho-  
ly Sacrament is near, a little before you  
communicate, make a short and serious  
Review of the Faults and Unfaithfulness  
you have committed against your Saviour,  
since your last Approach to that Holy Ta-  
ble, and being filled with Shame at your  
self, and seized with a Holy Fear, be con-  
founded at your Ingratitude and Unwor-  
thiness to receive it: But considering at  
the same time his Goodness and Readiness  
to pardon, and Inclination to shew Mercy,  
and encouraging your self with a pious  
Confidence, that he would have you re-  
ceive him notwithstanding your Unwor-  
thiness,

But with-  
al to have  
Courage  
and Confi-  
dence.

hinefs, go on with Cheerfulness to this Heavenly Banquet, and joyfully embrace your Saviour in your Soul.

After Communion, retire as soon as possible into the Secret of your Heart, and then discover to your divine Physician all your Defects and Deformities, saying in your Mind : *Thou seest, O my Saviour, how ready I am to offend thee, and how many miserable Defects I have ; that this Passion does so violently oppose me, that it is impossible for me ever to deliver my self from it : Thou, O my God, alone must fight my Battles for me, and it is from thee alone that I must hope for the Victory.*

After you have thus silently prayed, turn your self to the Eternal Father, and present before him his dear Sons Passion, to the same End that you received him for ; and expect with constant Hope his divine Help which though you are not presently sensible of, you shall infallibly find it, when it is most expedient for you.

## C H A P. XXVIII.

*How we, may by the Holy Communion excite in our selves fervent Affections.*

**T**O excite in you by means of this Holy Sacrament, such a fervent Love of God, as may destroy and consume all self-will, and self-love ; you must represent to your self the immense Love that God

After Communion, discover your Wants.

And constantly hope for the divine Help.

Consider the infinite Love and Goodness of God ;

God



God has for you; considering the Evening before that the Almighty and supream Lord, was not content to have created you after his own Image and Likeness, nor to have sent his only Son into the World, to serve you there Three and Thirty Years, in continual Labours and Sufferings; and lastly, to undergo a most cruel Death on the Cross for your Redemption; but he would also leave you the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, for the Food and Refreshment of your Soul, and for your Succour and Support in all your Straits and Necessities. And that you may be

Especially  
shew'd in  
the Holy  
Sacra-  
ment;  
weighing  
first who  
it is that  
comes to  
you.  
Secondly  
what he  
gives you.

inflamed all over with the Fire of this Love, by a true Sense of so precious a Gift, you may *first* consider who is it that bestows this upon you; it is no less than God himself, the divine and increated Power, Wisdom and Goodness, which has no Bounds, whose Excellency and Perfection infinitely exceeds the reach of all created Capacities. *Secondly*, look upon the Gift, as it is in it self, which is the true and only Son of the Eternal Father, to whom he is equal in Majesty and Greatness, being of the same Substance, and of the same Nature.

Now if we esteem so highly of a Temporal Gift of little Value, when it comes from an Earthly Prince, and if we so carefully preserve it for his sake that gave it; what account should we make of a Gift, that is not only supernatural, but also more than Heavenly, and of an incomprehensi-

ble Excellence? And how much is it to be valued as it is the Son of God, and given us by God himself, as a Token of his Love, and tender Affection towards us?

After this, raise your Thoughts farther to reflect upon the *Eternity of this divine Love*, and that before all time, God who is an infinite Good, proposed to give himself to you for your Food and Nourishment: And thus touched and moved with inward Joy, say in your self: *Is it so then, O infinite Goodness of my God; that thou didst love me in that Abyss of Eternity? And that thou dost so much value thy poor and unworthy Creature? That thou remembrest me in thy Blessed Eternity, and that my God then had an ardent Desire to give himself to me for the Food of my Soul? O unspeakable Mercy! who can sufficiently value it?*

Thirdly,  
the Eternity of  
this Love.

Consider lastly, the *Purity of the Love*, that so great a Lord shews to so mean a Worm! How different it is from that of Men! How free from the least mixture of Profit or self-interest! How far it is above your Merits, and what a pure Influence is it of his Mercy and Goodness! In the Sweetness of this Meditation, and in Love and Admiration of the divine Bounty, your Heart may break out into these Raptures:

Fourthly,  
the Purity  
of this  
Love.

*Whence is it O my Lord and Saviour that thou lovest me so much, that am such a vile and unworthy Creature? Why art thou so desirous O King of Glory, to join thy self to me who am but Dust and Ashes? I conceive the Design, O my Dear Lord, of this thy excessive Love towards*

wards me; It is to win me reciprocally to thy Love. O the Purity of divine Love! Thou lovedst me O my God, and gavest thy whole self to me for no other End but that I may in Gratitude give thee my Love, my Life, my all intirely: Not that thou hast any need of me, but meerly for thy Mercy sake and for my Eternal Profit and Advancement; that by this sweet Tye and happy Union of Love, my earthly Heart may be raised up to become one with thee, O my Lord and my God.

And Ravished to see your self so highly valued: Here all ravish'd with Joy to see your self so highly valued and beloved of God, withdraw and retire into the secretest Part of your Heart, and there considering that all this Love was to draw and entice such a poor and inconsiderable Creature as your self, to his divine Majesty; make such an absolute Oblation of your self to him, that your Memory may scarce think of any thing but God, your Affection may abhor all Content that may come from any thing but him, and your Understanding may admit of no other Object for its Entertainment than him, who is the only true Satisfaction of all your inward Faculties and outward Senses.

And this being the chief Act of Religion. And since there is no Act of Religion in the Service of God, that is equal or comparable to this, (of receiving the blessed Sacrament) either to reconcile him to us, or unite us to his Love; force your self to perform it the utmost of your Power to prepare, purify, open and resign your Heart to him, most perfectly. and to shut it against all Earthly Things. Then



Then offer and dedicate your self to God, with as much Heartiness and Affection as possibly you can, endeavouring to preserve always in your Heart, an ardent Desire of following his holy Will. And when you perceive this Desire and Affection well enkindled in you, you may know by the Light of your Understanding, that God desires with all the Ardency of his Love, you should the day following open your Heart to him, that he may enter in and make his Abode there, to feast with you and to take his full Delight in you: You therefore ought to shew your mutual Desire to receive him with these kind of Ejaculatory Prayers: *O Heavenly Manna! O Divine Manna! When shall I receive thee into my Soul, according to thy own Desire! When shall I be united to thee by a true Love and sincere Affection! When shall it be (O thou Life of my Soul,) that I shall be delivered from my Imperfections and self-will for thy Love!*

Dedicate  
your self  
wholly to  
God.

And free-  
ly open  
your  
Heart to  
him;

In such and the like Prayers and Meditations, you may spend the Evening and Morning, to excite, encrease, and enflame your Desire to receive your dear Saviour, to please him and be most happily united to him. Take care above all, to be well recollected in your self, so that all the Powers and Faculties of your Soul may be disengaged and free from all Curiosity of vain and idle Thoughts or worldly Affairs: Let the same Watch be upon your Senses, lest your Heart steal out by them, to take some Pleasure in outward Objects, and so

But take  
heed of  
Vanity  
and Curiosity.

you

you lose all the Benefit of your Devotion and Recollection.

At the  
time near  
the Com-  
munion,  
think  
what you  
are going  
to do.

The time of communicating drawing nigh, think you are going to receive him who is the Lord of all the Universe, and who has made you after his own Likeness, the Son of God, who died for you upon the Cross, that infinite Goodness, who has so often rescued you from danger of Death and Eternal Damnation, which your Sins have deserved.

Thank,  
Adore,  
Implore.

Thank him therefore with most profound Humility, and (uniting your Spirit and all the Forces and Powers of Body and Soul together,) adore him as true God and true Man: Implore also his Pardon for all your Faults and Ingratitude; and that the same Love which moves him to bestow so noble a Gift upon you, may also induce him to purge out all your Stains of Sin and Uncleaness, to dispose you thereby to a more durable and perfect Union with his divine Majesty.

When the  
Priest  
says, we  
do not  
presume.  
&c.

When the Priest has made an end of that Prayer, *We do not presume to come to this thy Table, &c. We are not worthy, &c.* Follow him with these or the like Expressions, speaking them from the bottom of your Soul: *I am not worthy to receive thee, O my Lord, before whose Majesty the Angels in Heaven tremble and veil their Faces. I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my Roof, who am one of the meanest, weakest and ungratefulest Creatures upon the Earth! I am not worthy, O my Lord, that thou shouldst enter*  
into

## Of the Benefit of the Sacrament.

245

into my Heart, because I love thee and remember thee so little; tho' these were the principal Reasons of thy instituting this blessed Sacrament.

Thus humble and abase your self at the Consideration of your Sin and Misery, and then raising your Heart with a firm Confidence in God, say: *But do thou only speak the Word, O my Lord, and thy Servant shall be healed. Enter, O my Love, into my unwor- thy Breast, and make use of thy infinite Power and Goodness in pardoning my Sins, supplying my Defects, and protecting me from my Enemies.*

Humble  
and abase  
your self  
and then  
raise up  
your  
Heart  
with  
Hope.

After you have received, retire your self as soon as you can into the most interiour Part of your Soul, and there entertaining your self with your Beloved Guest, use these or the like respectful Expressions: *What hath moved thee, O Great King of Kings, to enter into me, who am so miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked? He will answer thee: 'Tis Love; for thou art my Dove, my Friend, my Sister, my Spouse and my dearly Beloved: Then reply to him: O uncreated Love, O sweet Love! What dost thou demand of me? What wouldst thou have me to do? What is it that thou dost desire of me? I ask nothing (says he,) but Love: I would have nothing burn in thy Heart but the Fire of my Love, and that it should devour all other Love within thee, and destroy all self-will and self-seeking. This, this is my Desire, because I would be truly thine, and would have thee likewise to be wholly mine, which can never be, till thou freely deliverest up*

Having  
received,  
entertain  
your  
Guest  
with the  
most res-  
pectful  
Carriage,  
and Ex-  
pressions  
of Love.

L

thy



## Of the Benefit of the Sacrament.

thy self to my Will and Pleasure; for without this entire Resignation, thy Mind will be always taken up with some vain Complacency and Love of thy self and thy own Actions. I desire therefore, that thou shouldst hate thy self, that I may make thee Partaker of my Love: I would have thy Heart to my self, that it may be wholly joy-ned and united to me. For to this End was my Heart opened to thee upon the Cross: My Will is, I say, that thou desire nothing, think of nothing, and see nothing but my self only; that I alone may be in thee, that thou being swallowed up in the infinite Abyss of my Love, may be totally transformed and changed into it: And that thou mayest be perfectly happy in me, and I entirely contented in thee.

*Lastly*: In Memory and Virtue of that divine Sacrifice, which Christ offered upon the Cross, offer up your self, and all the Prayers and Sacrifices that are that day offered in the universal Church.

## C H A P. XXIX.

### Of Spiritual Communion.

You may thus often communicate.

**A**Lthough, my Beloved, we can receive our Saviour sacramentally but seldom; yet, we may receive him *spiritually* every Hour and every Moment; for nothing can hinder you from this, but your own Negligence, or some Fault purely of your own Will.

And

And this *spiritual Communion*, may be sometimes more acceptable to God and profitable to your Soul, than the *Sacramental*, where there was a Defect in a due Preparation and Disposition for it; For as often as you desire to receive Christ *spiritually* into your Soul, you will find him always ready and disposed to give himself to you for your spiritual Nourishment, and you may prepare your self for it, after this manner.

Raising your Heart to God with that Intention, reflect first a little upon your own Frailty and frequent Failings, till you feel your self touched with Sorrow for having offended him; then turning to him with an enflamed Affection and firm Confidence in his Goodness, beseech him that he will be pleased to come and visit your poor Soul, and strengthen it with his holy Spirit.

So also when you have a Design to do Violence to your self in something, either to mortifie some one of your Passions or Appetites, or to plant some Virtue in your Soul, make use of this spiritual Communion to that end: and addressing your self towards your amiable Saviour, beseech him with a fervent Desire, to come and take Possession of the Interior of your Soul; or calling to Mind your last sacramental Communion, speak to him with a Heart enflamed with a desire of receiving him: *When will the time be, O my dear Saviour, that I shall receive thee again at the Altar!*

Come now, O my God, at this time into my Soul, and communicate the same Grace and Virtue to me spiritually, as thou usest to do to those that receive thy precious Body. Or thus: O my Lord and my Love, I am not worthy to receive thee sacramentally; but do thou, O increased Goodness and unlimited Power, pardon all my Imperfections, and make me worthy to receive thee spiritually, to the Honour of thy holy Name, and the true Comfort of my Soul. And after that, continue silent and recollected within your self, imagining that you have received him, and entertain him as you are taught in the foregoing Chapter.

## C H A P. XXX.

## Of Thanksgiving.

All Good-  
ness is  
from  
God.

To whom  
therefore  
all Grati-  
tude must  
be shew-  
ed.

AS all the good we do comes from God, and 'tis he alone that does it in us; we are oblig'd to give Thanks to him alone for all our good Exercises: For all the Victories we get over our Enemies, and all the Graces, whether general or particular, that we receive from him. To behave your self therefore under them, as you ought, consider the *End* for which your amiable Saviour communicates these Favours to you; because on this Consideration depends the true Offering of our Praise and Thanksgiving.

Now as in all the Graces he bestows on us, he proposes his *own Glory* and *our Profit*:  
The



The first thing you ought to do, is to acknowledge his Power, Wisdom and Goodness, which so evidently appear in the Graces which you have received. After this, consider that not only you have nothing in your self that can deserve these Favours; but on the contrary, you are full of Imperfections and Ingratitude. In short: Be obedient to his divine Will, doing what he demands of you by the Grace he gives you; for he does not grant it you, but that you may learn by it to love and serve him better: Therefore to your Praise and Thanks you ought to joyn a *perfect Oblation of your self*, in the manner following.

First then  
acknow-  
ledge his  
Goodness.  
And then  
your own  
Unwor-  
thiness.

C H A P. XXXI.

*Of the offering up our selves.*

**A**FTER Thanksgiving for Favours received, the Soul presently breaks forth into that pathetical Expression of the Royal Psalmist: *What shall I render unto the Lord for all the Benefits that he hath done unto me?* And therefore that you may do something by way of Return, and seeming like Satisfaction you are to offer up to his Majesty all that you are, have, or can do. And that this Oblation may be an entire, absolute, voluntary, and efficacious Act of your inward Man,

Consider *first*, with a serious Attention, the Greatness and Glory of God, (which will  
First, con-  
sider  
very God's

Greatness  
and Glo-  
ry.

very much help you in the intire Oblation of your self,) and you will find that there is a Fear and Reverence due to his Greatness and Majesty; that there is a Love due to his Goodness; that there is a Hope and Confidence due to his Mercy; and so of his other Attributes and Perfections; and you will congratulate and rejoyce to think, that God is what he is, to wit, the Best, Greatest, most Wise, most Holy, most Happy, most Powerful, most Infinite Being, and that he has all the Perfections that he possesses; by these Considerations,

Secondly,  
adore and  
acknow-  
ledge him  
Etc.

variously multiplying several amorous Acts of Complacency in your Heart.

Then bow down your Body and humble your Soul with most profound Reverence before your Lord and Maker; adoring his Divine Majesty, and acknowledging him to be the supream Governor of all his Creatures; and particularly that whatsoever good you have by Nature or by Grace, is all his own Gift; since he alone bestow'd it upon you, and he alone preserves it in you: For thus you must needs confess your self to be his Debtor, though your Offering were never so great; because you can present him with nothing which is not already his own, and first proceeded from his Goodness and Liberality; nor does he lose his Title and Dominion by conferring it upon you.

Thirdly,  
offer up  
all your  
Interest in  
any thing.

In the next Place, pass on to the Oblation it self, and deliver up all your Interest in whatever you have or may have, into the

the Hands of your Creator, with all possible Chearfulness and Integrity. That is, offer up to him all that he has given you, and so commit and resign your whole self, both Soul and Body, to God in perpetual Subjection, to dispose of you both in Time and Eternity, as he best pleases. Neither let it suffice you to make this Oblation generally, by presenting to him the Root and Beginning of all your Thoughts, Words and Actions; but you should do it in a particular manner, by presenting even those also, which by reason of your State and Calling you are obliged to exercise, to the Honour and Glory of his Name.

And unite  
all to the  
Merits of  
Jesus  
Christ.

*Lastly*, unite this intire Oblation of your self, and all that belongs to you, with the Merits of Jesus Christ, the sweet Spouse of your Soul, that from thence it may have that Value and Esteem, which from it self you cannot hope or expect; and thus you may end your Exercise, by presenting the Eternal Father of Mercies with your whole self, and the Holy Merits of his Son from the Manger to his Cross: For all these are your Treasures, which he at his Death bequeathed by his last Will and Testament to you, whom he left entituled to all his Merits: But remember that you make this Oblation not only for your self, but also for the universal Church, and all her Members, which will make it much more acceptable to God, being perfumed with the Incense of Charity.

How to  
offer up  
Christ's  
Actions



for our  
Offences.

If further, you desire to make an Oblation of Christ's Actions for your Offences, behave your self in this manner: *First*, reflect upon your Sins, and perceiving that you cannot hope to pacifie the Anger of God, nor satisfie the Divine Justice by your own Endeavours; address your self to your Saviours Life, Passion and Death, and fix upon some one or other Action or Suffering of his, as upon his *fasting*, or his *praying*, or the *shedding of his precious Blood*; then consider that, this he did, and suffered for your Sins, was to reconcile you to his Father, as if he had said: *I do now, O my Heavenly Father, fully satisfie thy divine Justice for the Sins of this thy Servant N. O. let it please thee to spare him and receive him into the Number of thine Elect.*

Do you also make the same Oblation of your dear Saviour to his Eternal Father, and humbly beg for your self and others, that in Virtue of this Offering, and for his own Glories sake, he will in Mercy pardon both your own and their Offences. And this Exercise you may very profitably make use of in any Action or Passage of our Saviours Life and Passion.

*Another way of offering up our selves.*

That you may be able to make an acceptable Oblation of your self to God, consider that his well beloved Son all the time he was upon the Earth, made a continual Sacrifice to his Eternal Father, not only of him-

himself and of all his Actions, but also of Christ  
all Mankind together with himself; in con- here on  
sequence of this Reflection, consider that Earth of-  
our Lord Jesus Christ does still present and fended  
offer up himself to his Father, after the same not only  
manner that he did heretofore when he was himself;  
in the World. And so joyning your self But also  
with him, make your Oblation in Virtue all Man-  
and Union of his, or rather, make again kind to  
that same Offering of Jesus Christ, where- his Fa-  
in he comprehended you; and let it be ther.  
made with as little Mixture of self-inte-  
rest or self-love as you can, only regarding  
the Will and Providence of God, to which  
you ought to submit, and sacrifice your  
self entirely without reserve. After that,  
endeavour to blot all Creatures out of your  
Memory, and making God then the whole  
Object of your View, offer up your self  
to him after this manner. *Behold my Crea-  
tor and my God, a little Dust and Ashes in the  
Hands of thy Eternal Providence. Do with me,  
O my God, whatsoever thou pleasest, in Life or  
Death, in Time or in Eternity.*

When you would offer to God any  
of your Actions, as your Fasts or Pray- As also in  
ers, or any other good Works; consi- any of  
der first, that the Son of God offers still your  
every Day to his Father our good Works good  
with his, and in that Union that yours have Works.  
with those of Jesus Christ, present them to  
the Eternal Father by the same Offering,  
that his Son has made him of them: And  
you may know, whether this Oblation pro-  
ceeds from a sincere and dis-interested  
Heart,

Heart, if you can practise it in times of Adversity, and Distresses of your Soul, and if you support your Afflictions with Courage, and an entire Resignation to the divine Will.

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C H A P. XXXII.

*How to pray for divine Grace.*

**H**AVING made this *Oblation* of this most precious Sacrifice (which is no less than Christ himself with all his glorious Merits,) to his Eternal Father; you may then appear with Confidence before the Throne of Mercy, to petition for a Supply of your Necessities, and that you may do it in the best and most efficacious manner.

First,  
encourage  
your self  
with  
Confidence in  
his Goodness.

*First*, Encourage your self with Confidence in God, at the Remembrance of his Benefits, Goodness and Liberality towards you; for nothing can more strengthen your Hope of obtaining new Supplies, than reflecting upon his former Favours in times of Necessity, and know that this Confidence gives the greatest Efficacy to your Petition; so that without it, we can never expect to obtain of God any thing that we desire.

Secondly,  
join Humility  
with it.

*Secondly*: Let your Confidence be sure to be joyned with *Humility*, distrusting wholly your self, but relying boldly upon the Power of Christ's Merits. Nor would I advise you to become fearful and pusillanimous upon



upon pretence of Humility, so as not to beg large Benefits from God's Goodness; for though it is very necessary for you to know your own *Baseness*, and consider how little you deserve, yet you must never distrust the divine Bounty, or undervalue his Liberality: No, never be dejected, for tho' you deserve nothing, yet since the Gifts of God are not grounded upon our Deserts, but upon Christ's Merits, which are of infinite Worth and Dignity, you have great Encouragement to ask much.

*Thirdly*: Endeavour to press your Petition with  *fervent Desires*, that is, that you frequently and ardently wish to obtain what you ask for: For since you have a bountiful God and merciful Father, to lay all your Wants and Necessities before, and who not only bids you ask great Things, but presses you to it by so many Threats and Promises, and tells you for your Encouragement that he will certainly hear and answer your Petitions: Why should you not enforce your Request with enflamed Desires?

And indeed, we most commonly fail in the Effects of our Demands, because we want this *Fervour* in our Desires, and are so tepid and careless when we are at our Devotions, praying rather because Faith and Reason dictate to us that such things are needful for us, than that we zealously desire to receive them. The true Cause of which Negligence is, that our *Affections* are so fastned to *Earthly Things*, that we esteem them in our Wills, though we slight them with

Thirdly,  
press your  
Petition  
with ser-  
vent De-  
sires.

The Want  
whereof  
hinder the  
Effect of  
our Pray-  
ers.

with our Understandings; and consequently though we know in our Judgment, that our Minds are to be raised to higher Objects, yet we do not seriously endeavour to be dis-engaged from worldly and carnal Pleasures; whereas if we vigorously, humbly, and heartily desired it, our Prayers would soon have a very happy Effect.

Fourthly,  
add to  
them 1st.  
Charity,

*Lastly: Let Charity for your Neighbour go alway along with your Prayer; for you should not think it enough to pray for your self, but should extend your Piety and Compassion to the Necessities of others.*

Secondly,  
Perseve-  
rance.

( 2. ) *Perseverance*, for it pleases God many times to prolong and put off the fulfilling our Petitions, for our greater Profit, and to encrease and enkindle our Holy Desires: As is evident by the Example of the *Canaanitish Woman* and the *Widow in the Gospel*.

Thirdly,  
Resigna-  
tion.

( 3 ) *Resignation of your Will*: For you are to represent your Desires before God, as if you expected rather the fulfilling of his divine Pleasure, than of your Petition. So Christ prayed in the Garden: *Not my Will, said he, but thine be done.*

### C H A P. XXXIII.

#### *Some Advice concerning Prayer.*

First, read  
over  
night the

**I**N the Evening before you go to Bed, read the Mystery of our Saviours Life, or that which you design to meditate upon the

the next Morning, and contracting all your Meditation to two or three Heads, endeavour to imprint them in your Memory. Matter of your Meditation.

When you awake in the Morning, let your first Thoughts be upon that which you would meditate in your time of Prayer, shutting out all other Thoughts from your Heart, and at the same time call to mind the Points you proposed the Evening before, and remember that 'tis to God you are a going to speak. Secondly, Reflect of the same in the Morning.

Therefore before you are come to the Place of Prayer, make a pause for a little while, considering that the same God which the Angels adore in Heaven, is in the place where you are, that he looks upon you, and is present to all your Behaviour in your Prayers. Let this Truth make a deep Impression on your Mind, and thereupon pay him a most profound Reverence both of Body and Heart, as it were to desire Permission to speak to his divine Majesty. Thirdly, Consider his Majesty to whom you are to pray.

Then kneeling down, begin your Prayer, first offering up to God all the Thoughts, Words and Actions of your Life, particularly present to him all that shall pass in your Mind in this time of Prayer, to the end, it may all be to be his greatest Honour and Glory; and humbly implore his gracious Assistance, that you may perform it with such Attention, Devotion and Reverence, as befits one that is speaking to his Lord and Saviour. Fourthly, Begin your Prayer.

Presently



Fifthly,  
apply  
your  
Mind to  
the My-  
stery;

Presently after this, imagin your self present to the Mystery you intend to meditate on, and in the very place where it happened: For this may be a means to fix your Imagination, and keep it from wandering; as if you meditate upon the Incarnation of our Lord; think you see the glorious Archangel coming in to the Blessed Virgin *Mary* and talking with her: If your Subject be our Saviours being scourged, imagine you see Jesus Christ tied fast to a Pillar, and his cruel Executioners whipping and tearing his Body with Rods: Thus you may vary your Fancy, and conform it to the manner of each Mystery.

And beg  
what you  
intend to  
obtain.

And when the Mystery is thus present to your Mind, make your Petition, and beg of God what you proposed to obtain by this Exercise: As if your Meditation be upon Christ's Incarnation; let your Prayer be for spiritual Light, that you may more clearly know and perceive that ineffable Love that moved him to become Man for you: If it be of his Passion, beg of him Grace to be able to share with, and compassionate him in his Sufferings. Thus you may change your Demand conformable to the Mystery.

After this  
begin  
with the  
first Head.

Begin then to meditate on the first Head, and if you find in that matter enough for your Mind to work upon, continue on it all the time you have allotted for Prayer; but if not, pass on to the second. And briefly take this for a Maxim in all your Meditation: *In whatever you find your Affections*

*tions enkindled, stay there as long as the Gust or Devotion remains without troubling your Mind to pass on to any other.*

And let not your Understanding roam And let after high and curious Speculations, but not your make use of its Reasonings and Discourses Mind only so far as to excite in your *Will pious* roam after *Affections, and solid Resolutions to serve God* high and curious better. For that is the End we ought to Matters. have in Prayer. Therefore with every Consideration, endeavour to raise your Affections, and from every Affection, fix some particular Resolution, either to do that Day something for the Honour of God; or to reform such or such a Fault or Imperfection, or mortifie your Sensuality on this or that occasion. And this is the true Fruit and Benefit of Prayer.

Be very resolute also in staying out the And stay full time allotted for your Prayer; and be the full not discouraged from pursuing it to the time set end, notwithstanding any Dryness or Dis- apart for traction in your Devotion; and tho' even Prayer. all the time of Prayer should be spent in resisting and rejecting your Thoughts: For such a Prayer for the most part is more profitable to a Soul that is diligent in *resisting*, and patient in *suffering*, and *expecting* God's Grace, than when it sensibly partakes of the Sweets and Comforts of Devotion.

Your Exercise being ended, stay a little At the end to consider and examine how you have be- reflect haved your self in your Prayers. how you have be-

If you find it has been pretty well, and have had you your self.

*An Exercise for the Communion.*

you have done your Duty, give God thanks for it: If on the contrary you have been remiss and negligent, beg pardon for it, and after having found out the *cause* of it, make a firm purpose to correct your self in it the next time.

The Days that you communicate, you may take for the Subject of your Prayer the Exercise for the Communion that follows.

## C H A P. XXXIV.

*An Exercise for the Communion.*

1. The Place.

**T**HE *first* thing you do in order to compose and settle your Mind before the Communion Service, may be to imagin Jesus Christ present with you, encompassed with Angels and blessed Spirits adoring him.

2. Beg of God to prepare your Heart.

Then humbly address your self to him, with great Reverence; and since he has promised to vouchsafe to give himself to you in this Sacrament, beseech him to adorn your Soul with such things as are necessary for your worthy receiving him, you being so poor and incapable of preparing your self for so great a Favour.

3. Think what Guest is to be in it.

Then reflect who it is that intends to come to you, that it is not an ordinary Person, or one whom you have but little Obligation to; But it is he, who is represented to us in the Holy Scriptures as one of



of the most excellent Greatness and Glory who is worthily called a *Saviour*, from the Salvation he has merited and procured for us; he in short, that has taken our Interest in hand with so much Charity, that he came in Person to be our Mediator: That he has employed for our Reconciliation, not only his Authority and Power, but even all his Interest, Satisfaction, Honour, yea and his own Life too upon an ignominious Cross. And be assured and perswaded of this, that this Sacrament was an Institution of Jesus Christ himself, since he has said: *Do this as oft as you do it, in Remembrance of me.*

The *fourth* thing you are to consider, is 4. To *to whom* this amiable Saviour is coming? whom he comes. to a vile Worm of the Earth, a Vessel full of Filth and Corruption, that was a Child of Wrath, and of the Devil; and who has so often despised all the Graces and Commands of God, and does still abuse his Mercies, and takes so little care of serving him.

The *Fifth* Consideration you are to dwell upon, is, that he is a coming to *unite* himself to the Soul that receives him, for this end that it should live thence forward a divine Life, which it will not be difficult to convince your self of. For as the Humours of our Body are ordinarily such as the Nourishment we give it, so our Soul receiving this divine Food, will consequently live a divine Life; according to what the Son of God says: *As I live by the*  
M Father,

*An Exercise after the Communion.*

*Father, so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*

6. Make  
your Pe-  
tition.

*Sixthly* and lastly, pray the holy Spirit, that since for the sake and Merits of Jesus Christ, and not of your Deserts, he vouchsafes to come under your Roof, that he will be pleased to prevent you with his Grace and enrich you with his Gifts, that you may be made a holy Temple and Abode fit to receive your Saviour into; as he formerly prepared the Womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## C H A P. XXXV.

*An Exercise after the Communion.*

Think  
Christ to  
be with-  
in you.

**Y**OUR Exercise after the Communion, may be to consider *Jesus Christ* as being *within you*, and silently and quietly to observe his Operation upon your Soul.

2. Implore  
his Grace.

The Request you may afterwards make to him, is, that he would be pleased to give you the same Respect and Joy (that he gave to *Simeon*,) towards that source of all good that you have received; so that keeping him in your Heart, as *Simeon* held him in his Arms, you may say: *Lord now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, &c.* And endeavour thence forward to esteem and honour him as such a Favour deserves.

3. Consider  
his Dignity.

Consider then in the next Place, that he whom you have within you, is the same Son of God, *Jesus Christ* himself, of whom before

before the Communion, you conceived such high Things, and to whom you owe all that you are, as well in general, as in particular. Then render him humble Thanks, for what he is in himself, and for the great Glory he enjoys with his Father and the holy Spirit, above all Angels and all Creatures; and especially for this great Benefit of communicating and uniting himself to you.

*Lastly*, Entreat him that your Communion may not be *unprofitable* to you, and that he would work in you all those Virtues, that are necessary for your Perfection and the Accomplishment of his holy Will.

4. Beseech him to continue with you.

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C H A P. XXXVI.

*A Method of daily Examination.*

**T**O the end you may keep a clean Conscience, it will be necessary for you to enter daily into a *serious Examination* of it, to sweep each Corner of it, that all the Filthiness may be cast out. And this ought to be done every Morning as soon as you are up, and at Night just before you go to bed.

In your *Morning Examination* you may do three Things: *First*, thank God for all the Graces and good he has given you that Night, in preserving you from a Thousand Dangers and Snares of the Devil. *Secondly*: Make a solemn Offering to Jesus Christ of all the Thoughts that shall come into your

Every Morning do three Things.



your Mind, all the Words that you shall say, of all the Business and Actions you shall do that Day, that he may offer them to God and obtain Grace of him, that they may be all to his greatest Honour and Glory. *Thirdly*; raising your Mind to a steady Confidence in the Grace of God, make a firm purpose not to offend him in the least Sin that Day, for any thing that may happen to you.

And at  
Night ex-  
amine your  
elf.

And at *Night* a little before you betake your self to rest, examine your self how well you have stood to your purpose? But before you descend to particulars, consider that you are in the Presence of God, to whom you are now about to give an account of that Days Transactions; and endeavour to feel a certain Shame and Confusion in your self, like an ill Servant before an indulgent and kind Master, or a perfidious Subject before a Merciful Prince, who has raised him from the Dunghil to the highest degree of Honour: For how much more reason have you to be ashamed in the sight of God, the King of Kings, and your Sovereign Judge, whom you have served so negligently, and offended so ungratefully?

Begin  
with a  
general  
Acknow-  
ledgment  
of Gods  
Favours.

Begin then with a general *Acknowledgment* of all the Favours and Marks of his Love that he has shewed you from the time of your Birth to that present Moment, and particularly for the Benefits you have that day received from his Bounty; and call all the Angels and Heavenly Citizens to joyn  
with

with you in Praises and Thanksgivings, for the many Graces he has bestowed upon you, particularly for your Creation, Preservation, and Redemption, for his having pardoned you so many Sins, and waited so long for your Conversion, &c. And that you may perform your Exercise the better, when you begin to thank God after this manner, you should rest a little to meditate upon some of those Benefits.

*Secondly* ; Beg Light and Grace to know your Sins, and see the Defects and Negligences you have that day been guilty of ; and to feel a true Sorrow and Contrition for the same : For they are so many and so secret, that without this Light you will not be able to discern them, and of so heinous a Nature many times, being committed against so good a God, that without his special Assistance you cannot truly judge of them.

Then beg  
Light and  
Grace.

*Thirdly* : Run over every hour of the day, and examine with great Diligence, what were your *Thoughts, Words, Actions* and *Omissions*, that you may perceive in every of them wherein you have particularly offended God.

*Fourthly* : Endeavour to excite in your self a true Sorrow for your Sins, (which is the main Intent of this Examination) and let this Grief touch your Heart, and be the greatest that may be, because you have been ungrateful to so good a God, rather than for any other Inconvenience you may thereby incur. Let it proceed, I say, not

4. En-  
deavour  
to excite a  
true Sor-  
row for  
your Sins.

so much from any *Fear* of Punishment that you have deserved, as from a true Reverence and Esteem that is due from you to the divine Majesty of God, whom you desire to love and respect above all things. In short: Let your Sorrow be greater for having offended God, than if all the Friends you loved in the World were dead, or the greatest Trouble or Misery that could be, had befallen you.

5. Implore  
Pardon  
for what's  
past, and  
Assistance  
for the fu-  
ture.

*Fifthly* and lastly, implore his Pardon for your past Sins and Negligences, and his Assistance to amend your Life for the future; promising particularly, and resolving seriously, to shun for his Love this or that occasion of Sin, and to lay hold of such or such an occasion, for the correcting and mortifying your self, as you know will be most suitable to the Vices or Defects you are corrupted with, or the Virtues you want.

And if you  
happily find

And if you happily find upon a sincere Search into your self, that the Sins you have committed that Day are not so grievous as to excite you to such Shame and Sorrow, refer it all to the divine Mercy, and not to your own Diligence or Virtue: But reflect upon the *Faults* of your former Life; and how virtuous soever it might be, yet there will be something or other bad enough in it, that you will have reason to be grieved and confounded at, if you had a true and impartial View of it. And comparing it with the miserable Life of others, you may conclude it is meerly the Grace of  
God



God that has prevented and upheld you, otherwise you might have been as bad or worse than they.

*Another Method of Examination.*

Question your self about three Things: *First*, wherein you have that Day fallen and offended?

*Secondly*: What occasion'd it?

*Thirdly*: How diligent you have been in the Practice of Virtue?

Concerning your *Fallings*, read the 15 Chap. of this Book. Concerning the *Occasions*, resolve to avoid them for the future. And for the *Practice of Virtue*, strengthen your Mind with these three Things: Distrust of your self, trust in God and Prayer; suspect your past Victories, and don't rely upon your former good Works, but rather forget them, lest you fall into *Self-complacency*. Look always forward upon what you want, and how much work you have yet behind to do: And acknowledging the Grace of God to be the Source of all Goodness, thank him for all your Benefits and Blessings; for the Inspirations he has sent you, the good Motions and Desires to Virtue he has given you, for his Deliverance from Dangers, and Defence against your Enemies.

*The Conclusion.*

This  
Book  
well pra-  
ctised is  
sufficient.

Much more might be said of such important Matters: But let what is here delivered according to my poor Talent, suffice for the present, which if you endeavour to keep in your Memory, and practise in your Life and Conversation, will be of sufficient Benefit to you.

Above all things, beg incessantly of the divine Goodness the Gift of *Perseverance* in your unwearied Endeavours against your Passions and Imperfections; it being a very necessary Weapon in this spiritual Warfare against your never dying Enemies, which like ill Weeds are always shooting and breaking forth so long as the Earth has any Life in it to nourish them.

If you re-  
solve up-  
on the  
Conquest  
of your  
self

Resolve therefore to betake your self to the *Means* here proposed, and to fight stoutly, manfully and constantly, since no Man can avoid this Combat, without endangering the Loss of the Conquest. Nor is there any Hope of Peace with such Enemies, who do those most Mischief that desire to make a League and Friendship with them.

And be  
not terri-  
fied at  
your Ene-  
mies  
Power,

Neither be you discouraged or terrified at their seeming Power and Cruelty; since all their Force and Fury is in the more powerful Hands of our supream Captain, who by his Death has triumphed over Death and Hell; for whose Honour you  
are

are engaged in this Battle, and wherein none can be overcome but those that will themselves. And if your Lord, under whose Banner you are lifted, does seem sometimes to withdraw his Assistance, and delay the Conquest over your Enemies for a time, yet be not faint-hearted, but fight on courageously, being most certain and secure that his Goodness, Power and Providence will direct all Events (and more especially all Adversities) to the best Advantage of his Soldiers.

These Thoughts will beget in you a generous Spirit, and a constant Heart to resist and fight with Courage; and therefore tho' the Victory comes on slowly, believe firmly that this deferring it, is either to free your Soul from secret Pride, and conserve you in true Humility; or else to perfect you in Virtue, and to teach you to become a tried Soldier by these long continued Conflicts: Or certainly for some other good of your Soul which is then concealed from you for your greater Benefit and Improvement.

Go on therefore my dearly Beloved, and enter these Lists with a chearful and heroick Mind! Lest you seem ungrateful to God, who so much tendered your good, that he suffered Death for your sake: And attend very carefully to every Counsel and Command of your Captain Jesus Christ, that you may totally rout and ruin all your Enemies.

For



## The Conclusion.

For if you permit but one only to live, and have Entertainment in your Soul, it will be as a Mote in your Eye, and as a Thorn in your side, and prove a perpetual Impediment in your Progress to so glorious a Victory.

Apoc. 2. 17. *To him that overcometh, I will give to eat of the hidden Manna.*

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**FINIS.**

**THE**

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